

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES  
AS OBSERVED IN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA**

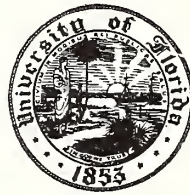
***INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
RELATIONS  
AT THE GRASS ROOTS***

**BY PAUL N. YLVISAKER**

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
RELATIONS  
AT THE GRASS ROOTS

A Study of Blue Earth County, Minnesota, to 1946

*by*

PAUL N. YLVISAKER

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES  
(as Observed in Minnesota)

A Series of Monographs  
Edited by William Anderson and Edward W. Weidner

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by William Anderson



## EDITORS' FOREWORD

The publication of this monograph in the Intergovernmental Relations Series calls for a brief explanation. It takes the place of one that was earlier announced as number 7 in the series, a volume that was to deal with intergovernmental relations in agriculture in Minnesota. That study was not completed. As editors we consider ourselves most fortunate to be able to present this study of Blue Earth County by Dr. Paul Ylvisaker as number 7 in the series. We consider it not only a most appropriate substitute, but also a valuable reinforcement to the rest of the monographs from an independent source.

As the author of the present study points out in his own Preface, it was undertaken by him for the Blue Earth County Council on Intergovernmental Relations. This organization, operating in the early and middle 1940s, was financed by a grant from the Spelman Fund, then one of the group of Rockefeller foundations. The council was organized at three levels: national, state, and county. At the national level, where it began, the council had a governing board headed by Harold D. Smith, then director of the United States Budget Bureau, and including the heads of several national departments and agencies, the director of the Council of State Governments, and several other members, of whom one was William Anderson, the senior editor of this series. The council at the national level had a staff of two men, and one or two secretaries as needed.

State councils on intergovernmental relations, consisting of some state officials and some laymen, were organized in Minnesota, Indiana, and Georgia, and later in several other states. The objective was to have an intensive study made and a demonstration project worked out in one fairly typical county in each of the states selected, to discover what needed to be done to improve intergovernmental relations "at the grass roots," and to show how the improvements could be made.

The need to improve intergovernmental relations in the field had been revealed over and over again as new national and state governmental agencies undertook to perform novel and important functions throughout the nation during the 1930s and early 1940s. There was a lack of coordination of effort and occasional serious friction not only among national, state, and local officials, but even between agencies of the national government—yes, even between branches of the same department, such as the United States Department of Agriculture. Harold D. Smith had had experience in both local and state government. It was only natural that as director of the United States Budget, responsible for trying to produce a maximum of service for each national expenditure, he should endeavor to bring about a better coordination of national, state, and local administration "at the grass roots" where the services are delivered to the people, and where the agents of all levels of government can come into contact and may come into conflict.

Blue Earth County was the county selected for the study and demonstration project in Minnesota. The senior editor of this series had a part in the selection of Blue Earth County and when the Blue Earth County Council on Intergovernmental Relations was formed he had a few conferences with its staff members, including his former

student, Paul Ylvisaker. The idea of the central staff in Washington was, however, that each county council, like that in Blue Earth, should generate its own ideas locally, with as little outside suggestion as possible, and particularly with as little influence as possible from academic circles. Loyal to this principle, the senior editor of this series kept hands off the Blue Earth County project. He had no responsibility for what was done or for the way in which it was done. He can, therefore, claim no credit for the monograph that is here printed. The credit must go entirely to the Blue Earth County Council and its staff, and particularly to the author of the monograph, Paul Ylvisaker.

The Blue Earth County Council was responsible for several publications. These are cited elsewhere herein. The present monograph is a distinct product of its author, however. It was first written by him as a thesis for a Ph.D. degree in government at Harvard University, which conferred the degree upon him in 1948. When it appeared that the monograph originally announced for number 7 in this series would not be forthcoming, we asked the author whether he would be willing to recast his work in a form suitable for this series, and with appropriate emphasis on intergovernmental relations. This he consented to do, and did in the winter of 1954-55. We have taken his manuscript as he wrote it, and present it with only minor editorial changes.

The other monographs in this series are based on studies that began in 1946 and are centered in large part around the years 1947, 1948, and 1949. The present Blue Earth County study, on the other hand, was practically completed before 1946 and is centered mainly in the years 1943, 1944, and 1945. We did not see it, however, until 1952. Although publication of the last monographs in the series, including this one, has been delayed beyond what we expected, we have not endeavored to bring the data down to date—an operation that is never completely possible in a field where changes come so rapidly and so continuously. We have, however, added a few editorial notes here and there in order to connect this study more closely with others in the series, and to present a few facts that reveal important changes since this monograph was first written.

The "dating" of this and other monographs in the series is highly important for the reader to understand, but it should not cause him any serious misgivings. There have been many changes in the details dealt with in the several studies. Financial statistics are no longer the same; agency names and programs have been altered; the criticisms made "then" may be no longer valid "now"; the officials of that day may now be out of office. None of these temporalities present any significant obstruction to the achievement of our general purposes. While trying to describe accurately what they have seen, both the editors and the authors have been trying to take long-term views and to probe into the deeper and more permanent aspects of political behavior that affect intergovernmental relations in the United States federal system. If we have not thrown some light on the more enduring phases of politics and government, our studies will in any case have been in vain.

We consider the present monograph to be especially appropriate for our series. It incorporates the results of an independent study made in Minnesota at about the same time as the other studies were produced. It is a study made "at the grass roots" in a predominantly agricultural county. It includes a significant chapter on intergovernmental relations in agriculture. It reveals how certain closely related problems in public health, highways, and public finance affect and are affected by intergovernmental relations in agricultural communities. It shows the actions and reactions of a group of sturdy, unfrightened, conscientious leaders who stood in general against the centralizing tendencies that they feared were about to engulf their county, and who held aloft their own banners for local self-government as they thought it should be.

Unlike every other study in this series, this one deals with a single county. The work is intensive for the functions that are covered (agriculture, public health,



highways, public finance) but it is certainly not exhaustive in the sense of covering all public functions. Education, social welfare, law enforcement, conservation, and various other important functions are not fully dealt with. Indeed, we have concluded that a thoroughly exhaustive study of all intergovernmental relations for any unit as big as a county is simply out of the question.

But Blue Earth County, though carefully selected as a "typical" Minnesota county, must not be looked upon as a prototype of all counties in the state. It has its own history, its own personalities and leaders, its own distinctive characteristics. It reveals a rugged "we-will-do-it-our-own-way" character that many counties would not display in the same way or as fully. Its refusal to apply for or to accept, during the period of this study, certain state and federal aids was typical of it, but not necessarily typical of Minnesota counties generally.

Equally "typical" is the fact that the early suspicion and resistance have been largely overcome. Blue Earth County, like all other communities in the nation, has had to strike a balance, as our author points out, between its willingness to pay for complete local self-government and its desire to obtain better public services and to keep up with its neighbors. In the long run the willingness to pay for all its own services has not been strong enough. It has been caught up in the trend of the times—but it has not been as one who surrenders unconditionally. Its struggles have not been in vain; quite the contrary. National and state programs have been modified for the better because counties like Blue Earth put up a fight for what they thought were better ways of handling public functions. If the author of this study is right, Blue Earth, like other counties in the nation, has not lost but gained in local self-government.

William Anderson  
Edward W. Weidner





## Preface

This study of government and of intergovernmental relations in Blue Earth County was not designed as part of the present series of research monographs. It began much earlier, and has grown through a number of phases. It started planlessly, with the impressions I accumulated while living my boyhood and college years in Blue Earth County. It continued formally and in earnest when I returned, after graduate training in public administration, to serve as research assistant for the Blue Earth County Council on Intergovernmental Relations. This project flowered for a time and then died, leaving much of its research undone and many of its findings unpublished.

Partly as a memorial to the project, more immediately in fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree at Harvard, I completed the program of research sketched out by the council, and presented the results as a dissertation in 1948.

What follows is a revised form of this dissertation. In reworking the material, I have tried to do two things: first, to adapt the study to the purpose of the present series by emphasizing the intergovernmental relations aspects of what originally was an inquiry into the general workings of American government at the local level; second, to draw out and stress the human element in the relations between governments, and as much as words will permit to recapture the atmosphere within which intergovernmental relations take place.

A word on both points.

Early in the council's project, and in my own research and thinking, there was a drift away from an early and single emphasis on intergovernmental relations. Hundreds of interviews with officials of all three levels of government had shown how many and how varied these relations were. But to those of us who worked on the project it was even more striking that these relations were so few and fragmentary when viewed against the hundreds of governmental units and agencies in the county and against the combined scale of their operations. Equally disturbing was the discovery that no one—among either citizens or public officials—had anything but the vaguest notion of what, in a total sense, government was doing in Blue Earth County. Citizens and officials alike were conscious of only the smallest part of the full apparatus and program of government in their community.

This being the case, it seemed obvious to us that intergovernmental relations could never be anything but fragmentary until a more embracing and integrated view of government could be formed and disseminated. What the council did to accomplish this objective is described in Chapter 1. My own response was to develop a thesis, not about intergovernmental relations, but about "community government": a thesis which was based on a thorough (and, I am afraid, a rather tedious) cataloguing of governmental activities in the county; a thesis which attempted to show how vast and yet how disjointed an enterprise government had become within one selected locality.

This was my thesis; and at the request of Professors Anderson and Weidner, I have tried to refashion it in a way which will bring intergovernmental relations to the

fore. I have deliberately not tried too hard—I have left intact the sections which describe government from the community's point of view, rather than from the public official's, on the premise that it is only when government is seen "whole," and as its various parts converge on the citizen, that one can judge the effectiveness of intergovernmental relations.

What I have done for the most part is to add or delete rather than rewrite. What I have added are certain observations and hypotheses about intergovernmental relations which the experience of Blue Earth County would seem to support. What I have deleted is what now, ten years after the research was done, seems needless or ephemeral detail.

And the reader should remember that all this is based on data collected ten years ago, written into thesis form three years later, and reflected upon now with an imperfect and—even worse—a creative memory.

Memory apart, I confess my share of prejudices and preconceptions. Part of these relate to method, and part to substance. Regarding the first, I should stress again that in this study, I have written about the place which during my growing-up years was my home, and about people many of whom were friends, acquaintances, and even employers. In that sense, the research began in 1930, when my family moved to Blue Earth County. I wish now that I had retained much more of the "data" acquired before I knew I was to make an academic business of knowing my community. For this early research was into persons, into their ways of thinking and living. This was interrupted by my formal training, which emphasized laws and jurisdictions and processes and organization. It was at this stage and with these topics as research guidelines that I gathered most of the data reported below. That formal "mood" has faded, and in retrospect, the most valuable parts of that research are the word-sketches I made after interviews with some hundreds of officials. If I had it to do again, I would start with these sketches and work on, to capture the mood in which intergovernmental relationships take place and the character of the people who constitute them.

For there is no such thing as an intergovernmental relation; there are only relations among people who govern. This is the starting point and conclusion of the whole report.

One last caution. My memory of individual persons and happenings is too rusty to rework what follows into a full study of the informal processes of government and intergovernmental relations in the community—as I would have liked. But there is one clear memory I do have, of a point which has perhaps been submerged in the flood of facts and criticisms that follow: The people of Blue Earth County are fundamentally a forward-looking and constructive people, in their public as well as in their private lives. Save for occasional glances at individual officials and their ways of doing things, the view given in the pages below is a restricted one. It shows the community of Blue Earth through the eyes of one interested in better government and intergovernmental relations, and more, one who for the time at least was convinced that these were to be achieved by streamlining administrative machinery.

The latter may or may not be true (I am still partly of the faith). Whether or not it is, the community of Blue Earth has not lived by such a simple and tidy creed. Yet with the limited focus used here, one sees only the shadow of an enlightened community, and the defensive myths which overlie the positive ideals by which its citizens live. For it is one of their characteristics that in their philosophizing about government they are doctrinaire and unmovably conservative; in their day-to-day life, intensely practical and receptive to change. In their talk, government is a devil; in

My final word is one of warm thanks to the scores of persons (their names are listed in the appendix) who allowed me to prowl about freely in their domain of fact and opinion; to Ralph Swenson, who worked with me on the council's staff and who compiled a good part of the data reported in Chapter 7; and especially to three men—William Anderson, Clifford Russell, and Robert McCurdy—who have contributed so much not only to this study but to my own education as a student of government.

Paul N. Ylvisaker

Swarthmore College  
February 15, 1955



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# **Intergovernmental Relations at the Grass Roots**





## CHAPTER 1

# A New Approach to the Study of Intergovernmental Relations

From the time the framers of the Constitution first sketched out a division of labor between state and federal governments and left it to custom and the state legislatures to establish the place of local units, there has been a recurrent need to appraise the part played in American government by each of its three levels.

The depression of the thirties stands out as one of the several periods in American history when the need for such an appraisal became especially critical. The governmental developments of that period are well known. The depression touched off a burst of energy in the federal government that carried down into state and local levels, and caused major adjustments in both the theory and practice of American government.

The full force of this new and uncoordinated energy broke upon the local community, where the interests and the actions of federal, state, and local governments converged. Much of what resistance remained in the earlier tradition of American federalism and intergovernmental relations against direct participation by the central governments in community affairs was removed. The federal government in a number of fields remained faithful to the principle of working through, rather than alongside, the lower levels of government. But it also perfected controls which it had earlier achieved through the grant-in-aid device, and went further to breed action agencies of its own in the community. The states, which had moved successively from a laissez-faire policy toward local affairs to constitutional, then legislative, then administrative supervision, and increasingly to direct local action, maintained their hold on the community's government and expanded their staffs of direct representatives in the local area. Meanwhile, local units were struggling to retain their own status in the community, alternately by making a show of independence and then by accepting the duties and moneys assigned to them under federal and state legislation—a task which demanded more adroitness than most of them could muster.

This powerful tide of governmental action helped to push the nation's economy out of the doldrums in which it had been left by the Great Depression, but it also left the community in a choppy sea of uncoordinated activity. Of the national action programs making their appearance in the community, only a few were integrated with the existing machinery of state and local government. Others were somehow tacked on; and a large number, especially in the field of agriculture, were set up independently and made to operate on a direct line of authority from Washington. The community soon found itself dotted with governmental organizations, all of them influential in local affairs but operating without much awareness of each other.

Community government became, more than ever before, a complex of policies and agencies, representing the simultaneous interests of federal, state, and local governments. And the task of coordination became correspondingly difficult. It had long been the habit of local units to carry on in complete independence of one another; local officials had been bred to think of this practice as a worthy tradition. Now, with the influx of state and federal agencies, the prospects for an integrated program of government in the community seemed even more remote.

The sudden increase in "government locally" (if the term may be used to distinguish local action of state and federal government from that of the traditional units of local government) brought home the fact that the component parts of government in the community were without a common denominator other than the individual citizen upon whom they all acted or the whole American people under whose Constitution they existed. There was no body within the community whose competence or perspective covered the whole range of governmental activity. There was no clearinghouse through which the plans or even the reports of all governmental organizations could be channeled. The coordination that could be achieved within official circles was in every case partial, and in many instances could occur only at a higher level than that of the community.

Two consequences were almost inevitable, one following upon the other. First, a considerable amount of overlapping and friction developed, not only among levels and units, but among agencies of the same level. Action programs of the federal government, especially in agriculture, were frequently at odds with one another. Second, a number of attempts were made to cope with the situation, most of them begun by the federal government. One of the earliest was the effort made by the National Resources Committee to integrate the plans of federal, state, and local governments relating to public works. Others occurred as the United States Department of Agriculture, falling into and out of conflict with the state extension divisions and commissioners of agriculture, went from one experiment in joint action to another—from the early AAA tie-up with the state extension services to the full-scale land-use planning programs spawned by the Mount Weather agreement of 1938. The latter was destroyed by Congress in 1943. By then, however, it had become the most ambitious of the official attempts to bring order into the sprawling administrative system. The program had reached into two thousand counties, and was then on the verge of breaking through into all areas of governmental activity: local committees were reporting that their work could not be profitably limited to the field of agriculture.

Taking their cue partly from the land-use planning program, and expressly motivated by the increasing difficulty of running effective administrative programs, Harold Smith, director of the United States Budget Bureau, and a group of fellow administrators approached the directors of the Rockefeller Foundation's Spelman Fund in 1941 with a new idea for untangling the lines of federal action and improving intergovernmental relationships. Their project was intended to operate at the community level; its approach to the study of the local workings of American government is essentially the one relied upon in the following report.

The project was later to be known as the Council on Intergovernmental Relations (CIR). It grew out of a discussion held in 1940 between Smith and several others who were directly concerned with the problem: M. L. Wilson, director of the Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture; Paul V. McNutt, then administrator of the Federal Security Agency; John Carmody, then administrator of the Federal Works Agency; and Guy Moffett of the Spelman Fund, whose independent inquiries into the problem had led him to call the group together.<sup>1</sup>

Following their discussion, the men organized themselves as a temporary committee designating Smith as chairman. Through him, they submitted a memorandum to President Roosevelt suggesting a project to explore the possibilities of integrating the various programs of federal, state, and local governments. In the opinion of the committee, the

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<sup>1</sup>A more extensive account of the project is given in Grass Roots: A Report and an Evaluation (Washington, D.C.: Council on Intergovernmental Relations, September 1947), released by the Federal Council on Intergovernmental Relations as a final progress report.

project was one that "would go to the roots of the democratic and administrative processes."

The President expressed interest in the proposal and belief in its underlying principles. Assured of his support, Smith explored the matter further in conversations with a number of men in both public and academic life. All agreed that the undertaking would have a greater chance of success if financed privately rather than by public funds. On that advice, Smith submitted his committee's proposal to the trustees of the Spelman Fund of New York. He received their approval in October 1942, and with it a grant of \$250,000.

The essential features of the proposal, as approved, may be outlined as follows:

A. Nature of Proposal

An experimental program to test the practicability of securing better coordination and integration of the operations of federal, state, and local agencies.

B. Objectives

1. To increase the constructive benefits to the individual, the family, and the community of various federal, state, and local programs—particularly those designed to relieve immediate distress, rehabilitate individuals and families, and restore them to a permanent self-supporting status.
2. To devise administrative mechanisms and methods for blending more harmoniously the powers and interests of federal, state, and local governments in the execution of their common purposes.

C. Method

1. Set up, with the cooperation of the government jurisdictions concerned, demonstrations in from three to five local areas, probably counties, over a period of three to five years.
2. Make an intensive study of the existing situation in such areas.
3. Formulate longer term goals for the area.
4. Develop and execute a unified program designed to realize those objectives.
5. Subject the current operations of various programs, singly or in combination, to careful analysis to determine modifications or readjustments essential to best results.
6. Develop machinery and methods, transferable to other areas, which can be assimilated into the permanent administrative structures.

D. Organization

1. A committee at the federal level to lay out detailed plans and supervise operations.
2. Horizontal councils at the state and local levels.
3. A local council in each demonstration area to include elected representatives and interested local citizens, with paid employees as technical advisers.
4. A coordinating executive under the federal committee and a coordinating executive with research and staff assistants in each demonstration area.

E. Financing

So far as possible the cost of the enterprise would be absorbed by the participating agencies, but where necessary it might be shared by private sources.

The organization of the federal council was soon complete. Smith was named chairman of a group which included three other federal administrators and four experts in the field of public administration: Paul V. McNutt (succeeded by Watson Miller in 1945); Phillip B. Fleming, administrator of the Federal Works Agency; M. L. Wilson; William Anderson, chairman of the department of political science of the University of Minnesota; Luther H. Gulick, director of the Institute of Public Administration; Earl D. Mallery, executive director of the American Municipal Association; and Frank Bane, executive director of the Council of State Governments. This group in turn



appointed a permanent staff to head the Washington office: as director, Major John O. Walker, who had served as "trouble shooter" in a number of federal agencies; and as his assistant, Milton C. Cummings, a college friend of Smith's, a former federal bureaucrat, and at the time of his appointment a professor of sociology in a New York state teachers college.

The selection of the demonstration areas proved a more difficult task. At the start, the federal council set up certain criteria to govern the choice of the states (and eventually the county within each state) which were to serve as laboratories for the experiment. For the states, these requirements were that they be typical of several sections of the United States; that their administration, and particularly their governors, should have demonstrated a marked interest in administrative improvement and a cooperative attitude toward federal and local levels of government; and that the laws of the state should permit local government a maximum of experimentation and initiative.

The criteria applying to the choice of counties included a population ranging between 25,000 and 125,000, evenly divided between urban and rural; and above-average rating in soil productivity; a relatively high socioeconomic index; and a show of interest in the project on the part of local officials.

The selection process occupied the first six months of the council's allotted time of three years. The permanent staff scouted the country interviewing state and local officials and gathering the necessary factual data. By the end of 1943, three states had been chosen, Minnesota, Georgia, and Indiana; California and Washington were chosen in 1945. In at least two of the original states, the attitudes of their governors were decisive. Ellis Arnall of Georgia and Harold Stassen of Minnesota were both quick to grasp the significance of the experiment. Governor Stassen immediately proved his interest by securing passage of a statute authorizing greater freedom of joint action among local units of government.

The counties were not chosen until the membership of the state councils had been completed. Uniformly, the latter were known as the State Councils on Intergovernmental Relations; they functioned in a purely advisory capacity without salary or permanent staff. Their composition varied with each state. In Georgia, the council was headed by the governor and included two state administrators, three local officials, a state senator, and a person active in civic affairs. Indiana's council was made up of five state senators, six state representatives, five state administrators, the lieutenant governor, and, as chairman, the governor. Minnesota's group was composed entirely of state administrators, except for the governor who served ex officio. Its chairman was the state commissioner of taxation.

Minnesota's project was the first to get under way. The state council was organized in July 1943, and Blue Earth County was chosen almost immediately as the site for the experiment. Soon afterward, the local Council on Intergovernmental Relations—from then on the activating element in the program—was selected by an informal process from among community leaders. They in turn appointed a director-agent as their chief of staff: a full-time worker responsible for gathering what factual data were needed and for carrying on the required administrative work. Their choice was Robert M. McCurdy, an experienced public administrator with a career background in Minnesota state and local government. He began work in October 1943 and during the course of the program was assisted by a secretary and one research assistant.

At their first meeting, the members of the Blue Earth County council served notice that they intended to take full charge of the program, and made their first independent move by declaring as their primary objective the strengthening of local government rather than the improvement of intergovernmental relations. Their assertion was

expressive of the community's economic well-being and its tradition of independence. Equally, it reflected a somewhat naive view that the community and its government could "go it alone." The later research findings of the staff, and the contact they were to have with Harold Smith and other non-local officials, gradually made council members aware of the complexity of the situation they were dealing with. But the objective of a strong and dominant local government in its traditional form retained priority over that of integrating federal, state, and local activity.

The independent approach which the Blue Earth County council adopted became the pattern for the county projects later established. Apparently, it was one which suited the federal council and its staff, for they furnished little in the way of leadership or guidance, and it also suited the work schedule of state council members. The latter, with few exceptions, were too busy with other duties to become much concerned with the program.

Eight months after the Blue Earth program was begun, Indiana launched its Henry County project, naming a former Chamber of Commerce secretary and friend of Paul McNutt as its local director. Georgia's Colquitt County council was organized several months later, and the directorship given to a man with wide experience as a federal administrator (including five years as manager of the Cherry Lake rehabilitation project). A fourth council, that of Santa Clara County, California, was added in December 1945. In June 1946 Skagit County, Washington, accepted the CIR label and funds for a planning program which was already functioning.

In each instance, the first months of operation were spent groping for a plan of action. It was quickly discovered that the objectives of coordination, integration, and decentralization were more alluring than they were helpful, and that it was not at all easy to isolate a problem which at first seemed so obvious.

Further, it became apparent that each council member differed in his attitude toward the experiment and in his notion of its objectives. One member of the Blue Earth council, an energetic county commissioner, remained cool until certain that the project would not be dominated by either urban or federal interests. Then, as he became increasingly active, he discovered that his connection with the council was enhancing his own reputation. Thus assured, he became a valuable member of the council. Another was a hardheaded shoe merchant, who resented the federal government for its OPA inspectors only slightly more than he did local officers for their inefficiency. To him the council served as but one more place where he could voice his criticisms. A third, the secretary of the local Chamber of Commerce, took up his work perfunctorily, happy mostly in the idea that here was \$50,000 to be spent in the business community over the next three years. A fourth was a practicing lawyer, something of a social philosopher, but too busy to contribute actively. A fifth, the mayor of Mankato, resigned shortly to become the program's most bitter opponent, battling it as an insidious infiltration of federal interests. A sixth was a Republican state senator who took on the duties of council membership in much the same spirit as he did his work with the Commission on Uniform State Laws, content to be found associated with the cause of better government. A seventh, the only Democrat on the council, had his weekly rural newspaper and county politics at heart, and enjoyed his work with the council chiefly for its conversational, prestige, and interest value.

Two members saw more deeply into the problem at hand and contributed imaginatively toward its solution. One was the president of the local state teachers college. The other was the council's chairman, provocative editor of the area's leading newspaper. It was he who, together with the administrative staff, assumed the real leadership of the project.

In the early stages of the Blue Earth program, and in the absence of any clear-cut formula for action, time was spent following up pet peeves of certain council members.



The educational system of the community was first given critical attention, then the highway system, and later the structure of local taxation. While the data gathered proved useful, the projects were undertaken with no over-all sense of direction.

It was not until the decision was reached to canvass the structure of government in the community that a start was made toward isolating the basic problem and fashioning a solution. When the count of units and agencies had been made—when it was found that "government" in the community was a composite of nearly three hundred separate federal, state, and local organizations—the size and complexity of the problem of integrating American government at the community level and of rebuilding the structure from the ground up became evident.

The subsequent history of the CIR can be told briefly. The climax of the project—and, in retrospect, also its justification—lay in the publication of a progress report by each of the counties, and in the picture each presented of government in its community. The plans which the several councils put forward to improve the operation of government at the local level, and their subsequent efforts to implement those plans, are less significant than the approach to the problems of modern government which they followed in their planning. It was not confined to "levels"; it went on to establish the concept of government as an integrated process in the community, rather than as a loose aggregate of power groups inevitably in competition with one another.

The reports of the original three counties followed within a year of each other. Blue Earth County's came first, in November 1945; Henry County's followed in July 1946; Colquitt County's in January 1947. After making their reports, the several councils set about designing programs to implement their recommendations for improving the grass-roots operations of government. Blue Earth's major concerns became health and finance; Henry County launched a program to introduce the study of community government into the public educational system and concentrated on developing a cooperative arrangement with the local planning commission; Colquitt County turned to agriculture and veterans' affairs; Santa Clara County advanced a plan for the central housing of governmental agencies; and Skagit County continued its emphasis on physical planning. Each made but limited progress with its reforms.

With the death of Harold Smith in January 1947, any hope of continuing the project beyond the allotted three years was dissipated. Spelman funds were not renewed; and after a period of diminishing funds and suspended animation, the program lapsed.

The demise of the program accentuated a feeling of frustration which had been shared throughout by many of those who participated. If the experience of the Blue Earth County council and its staff is typical, the immediate causes of frustration were the elusive nature of the problem and the apparent lack of any quick or concrete solution. This in itself is rich commentary and a beginning insight into the whole matter of intergovernmental relations. For contrary to what they were led or predisposed to think, those who participated in the CIR inquiry soon found they were dealing with trends and developments and moving forces, not with cases of iniquity that they might easily identify and correct. Their beginning repertoire of elementary concepts and criteria quickly proved inadequate: "local government," "decentralization," "efficiency," etc., did not suffice as descriptions, much less as remedies.

Expecting to serve as reformers, these men soon found they must be historians and philosophers. That they did as well as they did in such an exacting and unaccustomed role is tribute enough to their endeavors.

## CHAPTER 2

# Blue Earth County and Its People

The whole of this study is cast against the background of the culture and institutions of the people of Blue Earth County; and one should be aware at the outset that this community cannot fairly be referred to as a "typical" American community. If anything, it is representative of the country's stable and prosperous rural areas.

### LOCATION AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The county itself is located in the central part of southern Minnesota, and covers an area of approximately 760 square miles (see Figure 1). Its dimensions are governed by both political and natural factors: its width from east to west is thirty miles, or five townships; its height varies from twenty-one to twenty-nine miles, depending upon the course of the Minnesota River which forms its northern boundary. Mankato, the county seat, is situated at the great right-angle bend of the river, approximately ninety miles southwest of Minneapolis and St. Paul, ninety miles due west of Rochester, and sixty-five miles north of the Iowa border.

Blue Earth County's soil is its greatest asset. In 1940, 86 per cent of the county's 487,680 land acres was classified as "good"; 5 per cent as "fair"; and only 9 per cent as "poor." At that time, 458,070 acres (92 per cent) were devoted to farms, with 311,367 acres in harvested cropland.

The county's only mineral resources are its stone and clay, found in large amounts in the Mankato area. The stone is well adapted for building and for the manufacture of lime and cement, and extensive quarries have been developed. The clay has been widely used in making brick and pottery.

### HISTORY

The early history of the county is as colorful as any of the sagas of western frontier-building. The area was first opened to white men toward the end of the seventeenth century with the coming of the French explorers, among them Pierre LeSueur, for whom the blue clay of the county's river bank held a great disillusionment. Thinking the clay was copper ore, he returned in 1700 with a company of miners, established a fort, and proceeded to ship two tons of what the Indians called "mankato" to France. When it was found to consist of nothing more than good material for Indian war paint, the French returned to their more familiar, and certainly more remunerative, trade in furs.

From 1700 to 1853, when the county was created by the territorial legislature of Minnesota, the region of the Blue Earth frequently changed its political allegiance. With the Louisiana Territory, it passed from France to Spain by secret agreement in 1762; and in 1800, when Spain had seen clearly the handwriting on the wall, it was resold to France. Three years later, it was included in the Louisiana purchase of 1803, and in 1804 was attached to the territory of Indiana for administrative purposes. In 1812, it became a part of the territory of Missouri; in 1834, a part of the territory of Michigan; in 1836, it was attached to the Wisconsin Territory; two years later, to the territory, and subsequently to the state, of Iowa. Finally, in 1849, it

became part of the territory of Minnesota, and remained with that state when it was admitted to the Union in 1858.

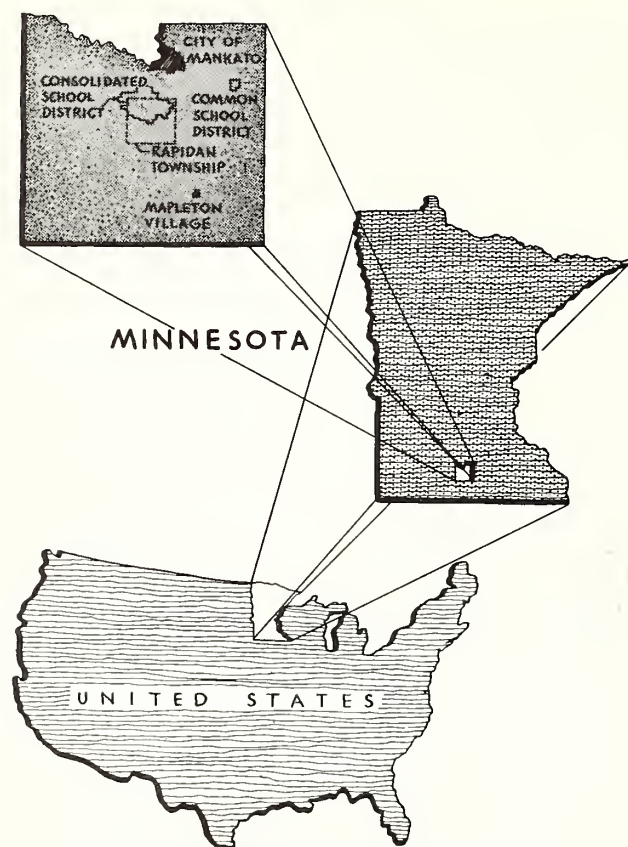


FIGURE 1. BLUE EARTH COUNTY

years. It was not so much the problem of supply: the land was quickly brought into use, and the steamboat trade that reached up the river from the Twin Cities kept the settlement in close contact with an established economy. The chief scourge was the Indian.

The Winnebagoes were newcomers: they arrived in 1855 with a treaty signed by the Great White Father in Washington, granting them—unknown to the white settlers until it was too late for them to put political pressure on the federal government—a reservation which occupied a six-township area in the middle of the county. During the years when the Indian problem was critical in the community, the Winnebagoes were largely a nuisance; the Sioux constituted the real threat.

Until the outbreak of the Civil War, the peace of the community had been broken only by occasional Sioux raids and infrequent acts of violence. In 1862, however, the army outposts in the area lost their troops to both Union and Confederate armies; the community had been drained of its manpower, and the federal government was giving but halfhearted attention to its responsibilities to the Indians. Angered by the failure of the government to distribute the payments promised them under the earlier treaties, the Sioux donned their war paint and started off to massacre every white settler in southern Minnesota. The slaughter of the whites went on for a full month, the situation becoming so serious that martial law was applied to the entire area. The end came with the Battle of Yellow Medicine in September 1862, when Chief Little Crow and

During the 150-year interval, the only permanent residents of the area were the Sioux (Dakota) Indians. The French were interested only in furs, and left behind them mere traces of temporary forts and trading centers. The Spanish, during their period of ownership, apparently never reached the territory of Minnesota. When Nicollet and General Frémont arrived in the 1840s to plot the area for the federal government, they found the region still a wilderness.

By 1851, after the Sioux had been maneuvered into giving up their rights to the land by the treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota, the stream of westward-moving American civilization had begun to pour in upon the region of the Blue Earth. Within twenty years the population of the area later to be known as Blue Earth County had mushroomed to 17,302—nearly half the total listed in the 1940 census.

If those two decades (roughly from 1850 to 1870) covered the county's most rapid expansion, they also included the county's most difficult



his warriors were decisively defeated by regular army troops. The whole affair reached a dramatic finale with the hanging in Mankato of 38 of the 303 Sioux originally sentenced to death. The remainder were spared by President Lincoln who intervened after the news of the original plans had aroused protests in the communities of the East.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the Sioux at this time became Christians; the whole tribe was moved on farther west, where some of the members continued to make trouble. The last of the Indians went with the departure of the Winnebagoes in May 1863—after eight years, the community's efforts to have the reservation moved had met with success. Within the year, the land thus released was claimed and settled, and the frontier days of the county were over.

The subsequent history of the county is one of steady and almost uninterrupted development, under conditions generally favorable to the community's growth.

#### CHARACTER OF THE POPULATION

One of the most favorable factors in this development has been the character and stability of the county's population. Many of the early settlers were Americans who had emigrated from the states to the east, particularly Indiana, Ohio, and New York. The foreign-born who entered came almost entirely from the British Isles and northern Europe: England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and Scandinavia. (See Figure 2.) All of them were characterized by an early writer as "not only thrifty and honest but as a rule devoutly religious."<sup>2</sup> All of them, too, were interested in establishing for themselves instruments of local self-government, in developing the resources at their disposal on a permanent rather than on a "here today, gone tomorrow" basis, and in obtaining education for their children.

One of the striking characteristics of the community is the perseverance of the same national strains found among its early settlers, not only in relative proportions but even in geographical distribution within the county. Despite the gradual filtering in of other nationalities, and a certain degree of intermingling of the rural population, the outlines of the original settlements are still distinguishable. In no small degree, the sense of permanence instilled by such long and continuous residence underlies the secure and somewhat complacent attitude which characterizes much of the community's thinking in the realm of politics.

Mankato, whose steadily rising population reflects the community's slow but persistent urban drift, has attracted the foreign-born in almost the same proportions as they are found in the outlying area, but the effects of the "melting pot" are much more evident inside the city than out. (See Figure 3.) The contrast between the city's population trend and that of the rural segment is marked: during the fifty years from 1890 to 1940, the city doubled in size while the population of the rest of the county remained constant.

Several other features of the county's population may be noted briefly. In 1940, the ratio between sexes was almost equal. Population density was approximately forty-nine persons per square mile. There has been, over the past generation, a slight

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<sup>1</sup>The incident has been alternately an object of embarrassment and of pride to the community. When the city erected a monument commemorating the site, it evoked bitter criticism from thoughtful citizens throughout the nation. More recently, research by staff attached to the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg revealed that the Mankato execution was the largest mass hanging ever carried out; the Mankatoans, however sensitive, took immediate note of their historical pre-eminence.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Hughes' History of Blue Earth County, privately published in 1911, has been heavily relied upon in this section.

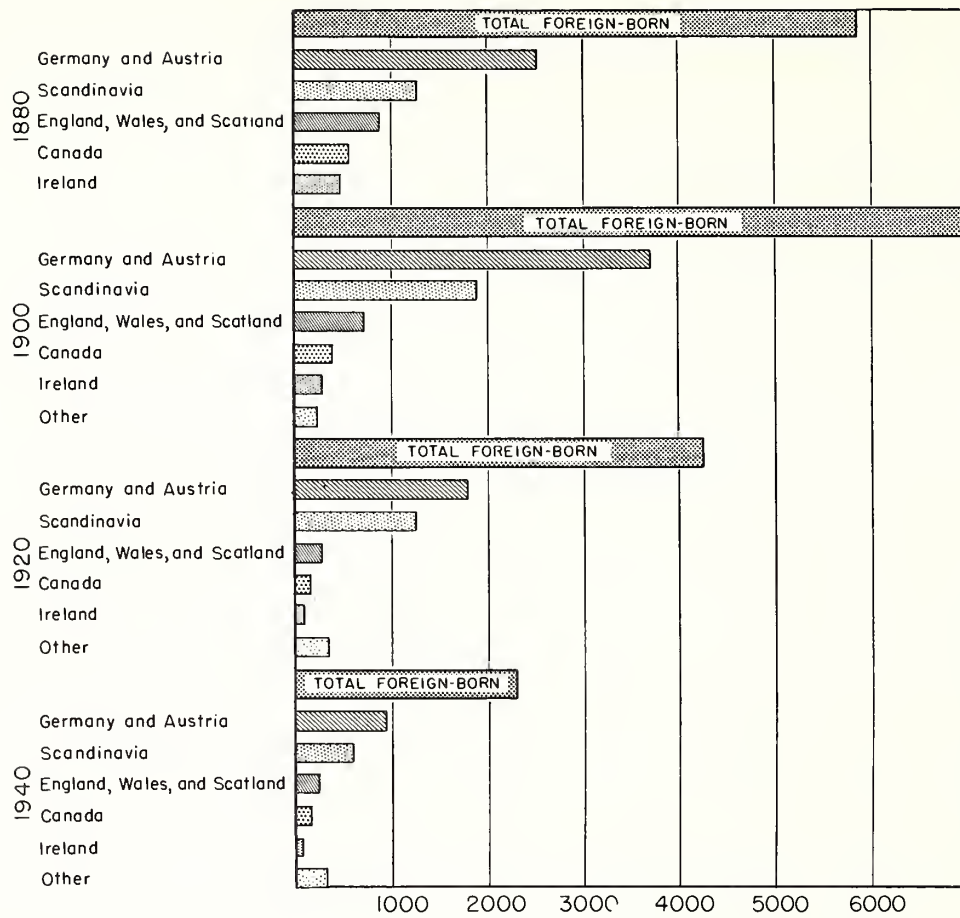


FIGURE 2. FOREIGN-BORN IN POPULATION OF BLUE EARTH COUNTY

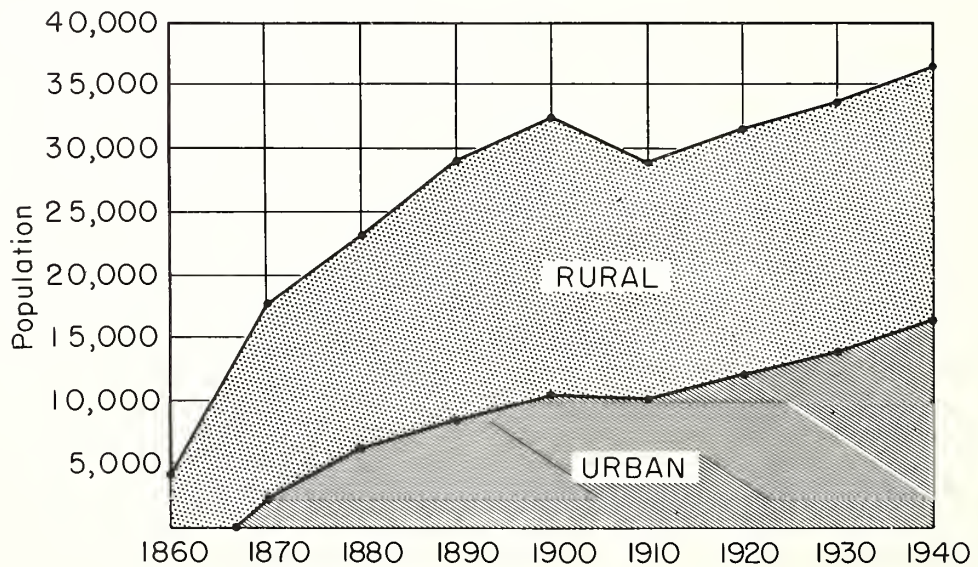


FIGURE 3. RURAL-URBAN DISTRIBUTION OF BLUE EARTH COUNTY POPULATION

increase in the proportion of older residents: in 1940, one third of the population was less than twenty years of age, and 12.7 per cent were over sixty. The median number of school years completed by those over twenty-four years of age was only 8.5; but more than 90 per cent of those fifteen years of age were still attending school in 1940, as were 6 per cent of those between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-four.

### STRUCTURE OF THE ECONOMY

From the earliest years, agriculture has been the foundation of the community's economy, naturally enough considering the location of the county, the fertility of the land, and the skills and mode of life of its settlers. These factors, together with those already noted—the comparatively undisturbed years afforded for the development of the area and the stability of the population—have assured the community of a continuing high standard of living.

As late as 1940, farming in the county still accounted for 38.9 per cent of the gainfully employed. Of that group, more than three fifths were classified as farmers and farm managers; i.e., as entrepreneurs rather than laborers. Ninety-two per cent of the county's land was laid out in farms, of which there were 3046 averaging 150.4 acres in size. (By 1950, the average had increased to 200 acres.) The total value of farm land and buildings in that year amounted to more than \$37 million (roughly two thirds of the valuation placed on all real and personal property in the county), and the total value of agricultural produce for the previous year came to nearly \$7 million.

Tables 1 and 2 show that farming in the county is not a one-crop business. The county is located approximately at the point where the dairy, corn, and wheat belts converge, and production is correspondingly diversified.

Despite the prospering of agriculture in the community, there was, until World War II when the trend was at least for a time reversed, a steady rise in the proportion of tenancy and a corresponding increase in the number of owners who had either sold out or incurred mortgages on their property. Between 1900 and 1940, tenancy rose from 23 to 36 per cent, and the incidence of mortgaged farms from 37 to 65 per cent. When viewed against the corresponding figures for the nation as a whole and in the face of the increasing requirements for large amounts of capital, these increases do not appear unusual; and certainly they do not augur any substantial change in the pattern of the economy.<sup>3</sup>

A more significant trend in the community has been the one toward an urban and industrial way of life. During the past fifty years, the entire net increase in the county's population has been gained by the city of Mankato. The latter continues to be almost entirely a retail and distributing center for the county, and for much of southern Minnesota as well. In this role, it still relies upon the agricultural economy of the area. Only in a few instances is its industry independent.

Until recently, these instances were confined to brewing, machine tooling and the making of electrical equipment, and stone-quarrying and the manufacture of related products. Since the beginning of World War II, however, and with the gradual passing of those who had worked successfully to keep the community from becoming industrialized (or, in some instances, to prevent the entering of competitive industries), there has been enough of an influx of industry to suggest the possibility of Mankato's becoming a manufacturing center. Transportation facilities and other conditions favor such a development. Four main-line railroads and a number of highways are routed

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<sup>3</sup>It should be added that much of the listed debt was and is a "family" matter—one member of a family borrowing from another.



TABLE 1. URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION OF BLUE EARTH COUNTY, 1860-1940

Divisions	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940
Total county	4803	17302	22889	29210	32263	29337	31477	33847	36203
<u>Urban</u>									
Mankato city (village until 1868).. (972)	3,482	5,550	8,838	10,599	10,365	12,469	14,038	15,654	
<u>Rural</u>									
Villages..... (972)	...	...	...	2,556	2,841	2,981	3,060	3,390	
Amboy.....				215	432	435	527	593	576
Eagle Lake.....						231	231	222	269
Good Thunder.....					505	419	464	452	457
Madison Lake.....					300	335	359	365	377
Mapleton.....			351	607	1,008	809	857	862	1,070
St. Clair.....						323	260	260	286
Vernon Center.....					311	289	283	306	355
<u>Cities</u>									
Lake Crystal.....		360	483	824	1,215	1,055	1,204	1,173	1,319
Townships.....	3,831	...	...	...	17,893	15,076	14,823	15,576	15,840
Beauford.....		336	598	725	706	646	651	650	690
Butternut Valley.....	156	590	614	659	661	611	612	656	659
Cambria.....		339	344	356	303	328	394	377	378
Ceresco.....	230	313	520	560	588	599	596	587	523
Danville.....	156	557	707	738	681	632	631	624	588
Decoria.....		262	673	1,011	994	762	719	693	695
Garden City.....	394	1,031	817	774	583	751	828	873	942
Jamestown.....	230	234	505	861	458	435	408	424	428
Judson.....	234	661	651	676	695	712	781	786	780
LeRay.....	69	448	1,170	1,576	1,437	849	738	843	743
Lime.....	232	744	592	610	650	544	480	450	501
Lincoln.....		495	515	458	586	471	467	523	545
Lyra.....		433	902	1,159	794	665	615	714	686
McPherson.....		903	1,017	1,242	1,114	616	552	697	653
Mankato.....	586	1,272	1,284	1,364	1,367	1,220	1,207	1,284	1,462
Mapleton.....	315	583	584	610	543	450	485	504	610
Medo.....		712	850	865	773	600	642	725	752
Pleasant Mound.....		448	595	688	736	699	668	704	685
Rapidan.....		449	796	1,060	1,075	1,118	577	1,030	965
Shelby.....	315	728	882	728	819	676	706	610	584
South Bend.....	452	596	514	547	620	568	517	667	836
Sterling.....		661	704	730	663	556	589	558	533
Vernon Center.....	462	665	673	729	712	568	560	597	601
Total rural .....	4,803	13,820	17,339	20,372	21,664	18,972	19,008	19,809	20,549

TABLE 2. ORIGINS OF FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION OF BLUE EARTH COUNTY

Country of Origin	1880		1900		1920		1940	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Canada.....	512	8.6	356	4.9	170	4.6	119	5.3
England, Wales, and Scotland.....	783	13.3	697	9.5	...	...	141	6.3
Ireland.....	483	8.1	311	4.2	101	2.4	28	1.2
Scandinavia.....	1,308	22.8	1,986	27.1	1,224	29.2	611	27.2
Germany and Austria.....	2,518	42.1	3,688	50.4	1,814	43.4	1,006	44.8
Other western European countries.....	...	...	134	1.8	...	...	114	5.1
Southern and eastern European countries...	...	...	42	0.6	285	6.3	107	4.7
Near East.....	...	...	67	0.9	...	...	36	1.6
Asia.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	0.1
Mexico.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	49	2.2
All foreign-born.....	5,976	26.1	7,320	22.6	4,179	13.3	2,243	6.2

through the city. Further, there is a large potential supply of labor among non-employed and partially employed members of urban and rural households. Local wage rates are comparatively low, unions are not aggressively active, and there is no lack of space for industrial and housing development.

The city's retail and distributive channels are already well established. In addition to stores and service enterprises, there are several hundred representatives and salesmen of nonresident firms who use Mankato as headquarters for their trade in southern Minnesota.

A final note should be added about the community's wealth and finances, although this topic will be covered more fully in later sections. In 1942, a representative year, the county's total assessed valuation was reported to be \$19,103,184, which is about one third of the full-and-true value, and the total property tax levy for all state and local purposes was \$1,246,486. Of this amount, 10 per cent (\$122,873) was raised by the towns, nearly 20 per cent (\$235,347) by the cities and villages, more than 30 per cent (\$397,246) by the school districts, more than 20 per cent (\$289,604) by the county—also \$61,419 levied by the county as special assessments—and the remaining 12 per cent (\$139,997) by the state. Outstanding indebtedness in the case of local units amounted to \$1,773,643, nearly three fourths of which was owed by the ten major school districts. The low incidence of tax delinquency (only 14 per cent in the dismal year 1933, 5 per cent in 1943, and almost none in the postwar period) is but one more testimonial to the healthy economic condition of the community.

#### SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The church, with Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian faiths predominating, is the oldest and most influential force in the community. Altogether, there are twenty-two churches in Mankato, and about ten times that number scattered throughout the rest of the county. Part of their strength lies in the close relation that exists between church and school, particularly in the case of the Catholic and Lutheran parishes. The members of both these faiths maintain a large number of parochial schools throughout the county; and in Mankato both have established secondary schools—the Catholics, a high school and an academy for girls, and the Lutherans, a coeducational academy and junior college.

Other moving forces in the community are the Chamber of Commerce and the nine service clubs in the city of Mankato, together with their country cousin, the Farm Bureau. The chamber has always managed to survive its internal clashes over policy, and is constantly at work trying to bring about greater unity between the rural and city elements, and to promote Mankato as an industrial site. The service clubs, especially the Kiwanis, serve effectively in their multiple roles as meeting-places, educational forums, good humor societies, and welfare agencies. The Farm Bureau is the only farm organization in the county, but it includes only about 40 per cent of the farm population in its membership. The bureau's role in community affairs will be discussed more fully in a later chapter; suffice it here to say that the familiar bond still exists between the bureau and the agricultural extension system through the county agent, and that the bureau's membership includes, for the most part, the older and better established farm families of the county.

The Community Chest, the Red Cross, and the county Public Health Association are among the organizations whose membership and activity extend to all parts of the county. As is the case with most of the community's charitable organizations, the larger share of their leaders and active members are women.

Obviously, this list does no more than touch upon the social groupings in the community. A complete census would include the score or more fraternal organizations, the veterans' groups, the YMCA, the professional societies, and a host of informal

centers such as the golf club, the county courthouse, and the armory. And the rural citizens of Blue Earth County still live in the day of the general store, the littered office of the politically minded editor of the rural weekly, and the climactic county fair.

Perhaps the most complex aspect of social organization in the community is the relationship between rural and urban segments of the population. On the side of amity and cohesion, there is the similarity in national origins and the closeness in family connections; the essential interdependence of economic fortunes; the fact that Mankato is looked to not only as the market and central shopping district, but also as the civic, health, and cultural center of the community; the policy of compromise and co-operation (and advertising) adopted by the commercial men of the city; and finally, the centripetal power of press and radio as exercised by the Mankato Free Press, which holds a near monopoly on the local daily news market, and by Station KYSM, the only local broadcasting service.

On the other hand, the instinct of mutual suspicion has been kept alive by the inevitable clash of short-run interests. Rural mistrust is aroused by the "unfair" trade practices of the city merchants, by the "undue" concentration of wealth and population within the city limits, by the "aggressiveness" of city politics, and by other actual or fancied evidences of encroachments by urban and industrial society upon the rural way of life. Meanwhile, there has been growing resentment in Mankato circles against the narrowness of the rural outlook and the disproportionate control held by the rural element over county and state government.

Mostly, however, the relationship between city and country is taken for granted and differences between them tend to recede or to become submerged under other disagreements that are constantly arising among other communities of interest in the county. It is this pluralism of an essentially homogeneous population that must be kept in mind when we consider what this study refers to as the "community" of Blue Earth County. Strictly speaking, there is no such community; it is not a sociological unit, and its components do not observe political boundary lines. The one exception is the curious but powerful appeal to citizen pride and loyalty which the county's name and jurisdiction can make whenever the county's fame, prestige, or self-government is at stake.

#### POLITICAL CHARACTER AND ORGANIZATION

The people of Blue Earth County are, for the most part, conservative in their politics, respectful of tradition, firm in their insistence upon the virtues and the right of self-government, strong-headed and scrupulously honest in their administration of local affairs.

Their natural affiliation is with the Republican party. The founders of the community were predominantly Democratic, but by 1859 the GOP had taken such roots that its candidates scored a clean sweep in the county elections of that year, and in 1860 Lincoln was able to carry the county by a wide margin. As shown by the accompanying voting record, with the exception of the Roosevelt victories in 1932 and 1936, the county has continued to be a Republican stronghold. Nevertheless, the Democrats in the community have always been a force to contend with. For nearly thirty years before 1945, the local Democratic party organization was led by the late John E. Regan, frequent but unsuccessful candidate for the state governorship and a close friend of Jim Farley. A lawyer by profession and an Irish Catholic, Regan remained a Democrat of the states'-rights school. His break with President Roosevelt in 1940 was the start of a bitter fight with those members of the party who favored an alliance with Minnesota's remaining Farmer-Laborites. The fusion was later consummated under the name of the Democrat-Farmer-Labor party, but not until Regan had had his



VOTING RECORD, BLUE EARTH COUNTY, 1912-46

Year	U.S. President	U.S. Senator	U.S. Representative	State Governor
1912	R.....1,344 D.....2,025 Progr.....1,579		R.....2,322 Undesignated competition...2,773	R.....2,070 D.....2,059 Progr..... 430
1916	R.....2,864 D.....2,211	R.....2,594 D.....1,718 Prohib....1,143	R.....4,305 (No competition)	R.....3,797 D.....1,229 Prohib.... 311
1920	R.....8,894 D.....1,974 Soc..... 207		R.....7,289 Undesignated competition...2,453	R.....6,430 D.....2,632 Indep.....2,888
1924	R.....6,773 D.....1,123 Progr....4,360	R.....6,286 D.....1,268 F.L.....4,539	R.....7,639 D.....4,039	R.....6,493 D.....1,020 F.L.....4,591
1928	R.....8,120 D.....5,177 Soc..... 44	R.....5,926 F.L.....8,235 Com..... 123	R.....9,853 D.....4,105	R.....8,620 D.....3,579 F.L.....1,902
1932	R.....5,550 D.....7,925 Soc..... 158	R.*	D. At Large*	R.....4,679 D.....6,783 F.L.....2,716
1936	R.....5,550 D.....8,255	R.....6,656 F.L.....7,161	R.....5,390 D.....5,257 F.L.....3,984	R.....7,614 F.L.....6,850 Industr.... 170
1938			R.....5,309 D.....5,771 F.L.....2,545	R.....10,216 D..... 903 F.L..... 2,885
1940	R.....9,642 D.....5,880 Soc..... 38	R.....9,334 D.....4,802 F.L.....1,319	R.....7,869 D.....6,516 F.L.....1,320	R.....10,990 D..... 1,649 F.L..... 3,256
1942		R.....4,983 Indep.....2,083 F.L.....1,574	R.....6,501 D.....2,441 F.L..... 991	R.....6,257 D..... 968 F.L.....2,842
1944	R.....9,429 D.F.L....5,098 Soc..... 29	R.*	R.....11,272 D.F.L..... 3,320	R.....11,643 D.F.L..... 3,265 Industr.... 67
1946		R.....8,472 D.F.L....2,704 R.W..... 145	R.....9,011 D.F.L.....2,216	R.....8,270 D.F.L.....2,853 Industr.... 159

Source: Minnesota Legislative Manual, 1912-46.

Key to Abbreviations: Communist (Com.), Democratic (D.), Democratic-Farmer Labor (D.F.L.), Farmer-Labor (F.L.), Independent (Indep.), Industrial (Industr.), Progressive (Progr.), Prohibition (Prohib.), Republican (R.), Revolutionary Workers (R.W.), Socialist (S.).

\*Figures are not available.

day in court vainly trying to preserve by copyright proceedings the Democratic label for his own organization.<sup>4</sup>

There is little evidence of hierarchy or even of organization in the local machinery of either party. Somehow, without the community's becoming very much aware of the process, the leaders of the two parties manage to pick their candidates, adopt a party line, and name a group of delegates to the state conventions. Most of their strategy is worked out informally: during the thirties, the Democrats frequented the law offices of John Regan; during the war and since, they have been dropping in to visit with H. L. Burdick, rustic editor of the weekly Vernon Center News. Informal headquarters for the Republicans have been the front offices of the Mankato News, also a rural weekly, owned and edited by Val Imm, who doubles as job printer and state senator.

Partly because by law no party designations may be used on ballots in local elections, partly because the community shies away from the very mention of "party politics" (being an "independent" is a "good thing," though most who describe themselves as such vote Republican regularly), the party is not extensively used as a means of political action. It serves primarily as a means of attaching the electorate, emotionally at least, to the political life of the state and the nation. Further, it furnishes a rough index to the local citizen's political tradition and outlook; and not least, it supplies a claim, on proper occasion, for whatever patronage remains among state and federal appointments in the locality. Generally, the majority of the electorate are satisfied to claim an affiliation, to vote a straight ticket in state and national elections when they are not familiar with the candidates, and to join in heated political discussions along party lines—the more so as the issues are usually state or national and do not touch directly upon community problems.

In affairs of local government, considerations of party are not significant. Here it is a matter of give-and-take among public officials and administrators, civic representatives, aggrieved citizens—generally all those who can make their influence felt—and a day-to-day adjustment of their varied and conflicting interests.

Significantly enough, public office is not the means relied upon by prominent members of the community for wielding their influence in public affairs. Particularly in the city of Mankato, they prefer to exert pressure upon public officials either directly or through the civic groups to which they belong. The loss in time and income and the low prestige of local office account for much of their hesitation; the ease and effectiveness of personal action explain the rest. Among the rural citizenry, however, there seems to be a greater respect for public office and, as a consequence, a greater willingness to seek it and adjust to its inconveniences.

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<sup>4</sup>The county has also had its political flings, the rural element having been caught up successively in the Granger, Alliance, and Populist movements of the nineteenth century. In June 1890, for instance, thirty Alliances of the county met to present a full ticket of nominees for county offices, nearly all of whom were elected. Four years later, the Alliances had teamed with the labor unions of the county, but their convention was "stolen" by party regulars.

It should also be noted that among German immigrants there were a number imbued with the political ideas of European socialists. The strain was evidenced in a small but steady support of socialist candidates for local and state offices, but has been noticeably on the wane with succeeding generations—and with the gradual improvement in economic status.



Those who become officials are held strictly to account. There are no "rings" or "bosses"; the nearest approximation would be either the courthouse group of county officials whose long years of association in office make them a tightly knit society, or men of personal influence such as the late District Judge Harry Johnson, whose salty and keenly perceptive advice carried heavy weight in official circles.

The methods of control are numerous. Not least effective are the long tradition among public servants of honest and conscientious service, and the self-restraint which is a part of the strongly religious character of the community. Another guarantee—and a continuing testimonial to the conservative, if not suspicious, attitude of the people toward government, and to their respect for traditional ways of doing things—is the elective system: nearly every local officer of any importance is elected. But the value of the elective system as a method of control is limited. It does serve to keep the electorate assured and officials apprehensive, but it is of less effect than the everyday pressures. For example, not more than 100 votes (of a potential 10,000) were cast in the Mankato school district election of 1944—an election in which the underlying issue was whether to float \$1 million in bonds for the construction of a new high school. Within a week after the election, however, both old and new members of the school board were already weary of the diverse pressures that had been brought to bear upon them by constituents who had not bothered to vote.

The chief single gadfly on the body politic is Cliff Russell, one of the outstanding men of the county. Through the medium of the Mankato Daily Free Press which he edits, Russell keeps his 14,000 or more subscribers well posted on the actions, and especially the errors, of local officials. Most of his barbs have been directed at the mayor and the council of the city of Mankato—much to the discomfiture of the local merchants who object to having the city's embarrassing problems known over the entire commercial area. But Russell is not always negative in his approach to public affairs. For a number of years, he led the drive to introduce the city-manager form of government into Mankato; he was one of the early supporters of Harold Stassen and of his administrative reforms in the state government; and while in fundamental disagreement with many of the premises underlying big government, he has never in his editorial analysis of national politics lapsed into disgruntled nihilism.

Despite their underlying honesty and conscientiousness, the public officials of the community often deserve much of Russell's criticism. This study is not concerned with specific instances of their poor judgment or inefficiency, but rather with their provincial conception of public office and their limited perspective of the community they serve. Most of them are protective of matters under their jurisdiction and resentful of any encroachment by another governmental jurisdiction. This attitude results in the duplication, overlapping, and lack of coordination among governmental units that make a study of intergovernmental relations so complex and difficult.

Examples of this uncooperative attitude are easy to find. There was Charles K. Mayer, until his retirement Mankato's most prominent citizen—a person with a vast amount of energy and a low boiling point. To him, the mayor's job was of only city-wide concern; he immediately suspected and opposed any plan of action which carried the approval of, or linked him with, another governmental jurisdiction—increasingly so, as the plan involved larger units and higher levels of government. During his term of office, the city gained the reputation of being the prima donna in the League of Minnesota Municipalities, unwilling to cooperate unless its officers were also given posts in the league's organization.

Not all instances of "going it alone" result from personal obstinacy. With W. C. "Bill" Minks, sparkplug of the county board of commissioners for a generation, it had long been a case of satisfying a passion for success in public service within the established tradition of his county office. To him, self-sufficiency for each county

as for every individual was an unquestioned virtue, and he continued to expound it from his position of influence on the executive board of the state association of county commissioners. Only in later years, after it was brought home to him that the same developments that had produced a growing state and federal interest in local affairs were also enlarging the scope and prestige of his own office, did he begin to achieve a broader vision of the community and of his place within it.

For the late county agent L. E. MacMillan, the alternative to following his own path was cooperation with the action agencies of the New Deal. During the years in which his son had charge of the local United States Farm Security Administration (FSA) office, his relations with that organization were amicable. But a brief experience with the AAA, from 1933 to 1936, brought differences in policy, clashes in personalities, the echoes of organizational battles fought on higher levels, and a disruption of his own twenty-year pattern of activity; and it convinced him that reticence and isolation were the better part of success in public office.

Lastly, there is the case of the school boards of districts 110 and 152, whose refusal to cooperate reflected not only the outlook of their members, but also the general unwillingness of two neighboring groups to lose their identities as distinct political communities. The boards were each faced with the problem of replacing outworn, one-room school buildings located one-half mile from each other along a county road. Not even a joint meeting with the county superintendent of schools, who could hardly be suspected of wanting to subvert local autonomy, was enough to convince them of the logic of consolidation. Their answer was to build separate new one-room school buildings, the same half mile from each other along the county road.

#### CONCLUSION

It is clear that selecting Blue Earth County for the study of intergovernmental relations carries with it one disadvantage: its people are mostly rural, and have not encountered many of the problems characterizing America's urban and industrial life. As a result, one will not see in Blue Earth County the working of government in such important fields as industrial and race relations, housing, urban development, and city planning.

Still, the limitation is more than offset by several advantages. In the first place, much of the recent increase and experimentation in government has taken place in the field of agriculture. Study of this one area alone provides a fairly comprehensive view of the scope and methods of modern American government, and the range and patterns of intergovernmental relations.

Second, but little touched by urbanization, Blue Earth County has seen small change in the character, number, and variety of its local units of government. It is therefore possible within the area to assess the role not only of the more frequently studied units, such as county and city, but also of organized townships, villages, and school districts, whose place in the fabric of big government has received comparatively little attention.

And finally, there is an obvious interest value in dealing with a community whose characteristics so nearly conform to the assumptions of Jeffersonian democracy. The stability of the population, its tradition of self-government and continued insistence on the virtue of self-help, the value placed on a general but locally controlled system of education, the widespread distribution of property, and the generally agricultural nature of the economy give an opportunity to test the survival power of those qualities which have long been regarded as the core of American democracy, and to observe in general the adjustment of a self-consciously conservative community to the advent of big government, and to the impingement on its area of outside governmental influences.

## CHAPTER 3

# The Evolution and Structure of Government

In 1945 there were approximately 300 units and agencies, federal, state, and local, which played a direct and local part in the administration of government in Blue Earth County. Of these, 155 were units of local government. They included the county, 2 cities, 7 villages, 23 towns, and 122 school districts—and all of them had the power to tax. (See Figures 4 and 5.)

The state government, a unit in itself, was locally represented in the county on a regular or intermittent basis by 98 agencies.<sup>1</sup> This figure does not include the numerous officers of local government who act as agents of the state.

The local instruments of the national government, also a unit in itself, are not so easily found or counted. The total of 41 federal agencies listed here includes only those resident in the community or which could be readily traced because of the nature of their activities. The list omits an undetermined number active in Blue Earth County but whose personnel and offices were not available for study within or near the county during the period of the study.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY

The county is the oldest, area-wise the largest, and, to the residents, easily the most familiar unit of local government in the area, though its legal complexities are not fully appreciated by the community, which tends to take the county for granted.

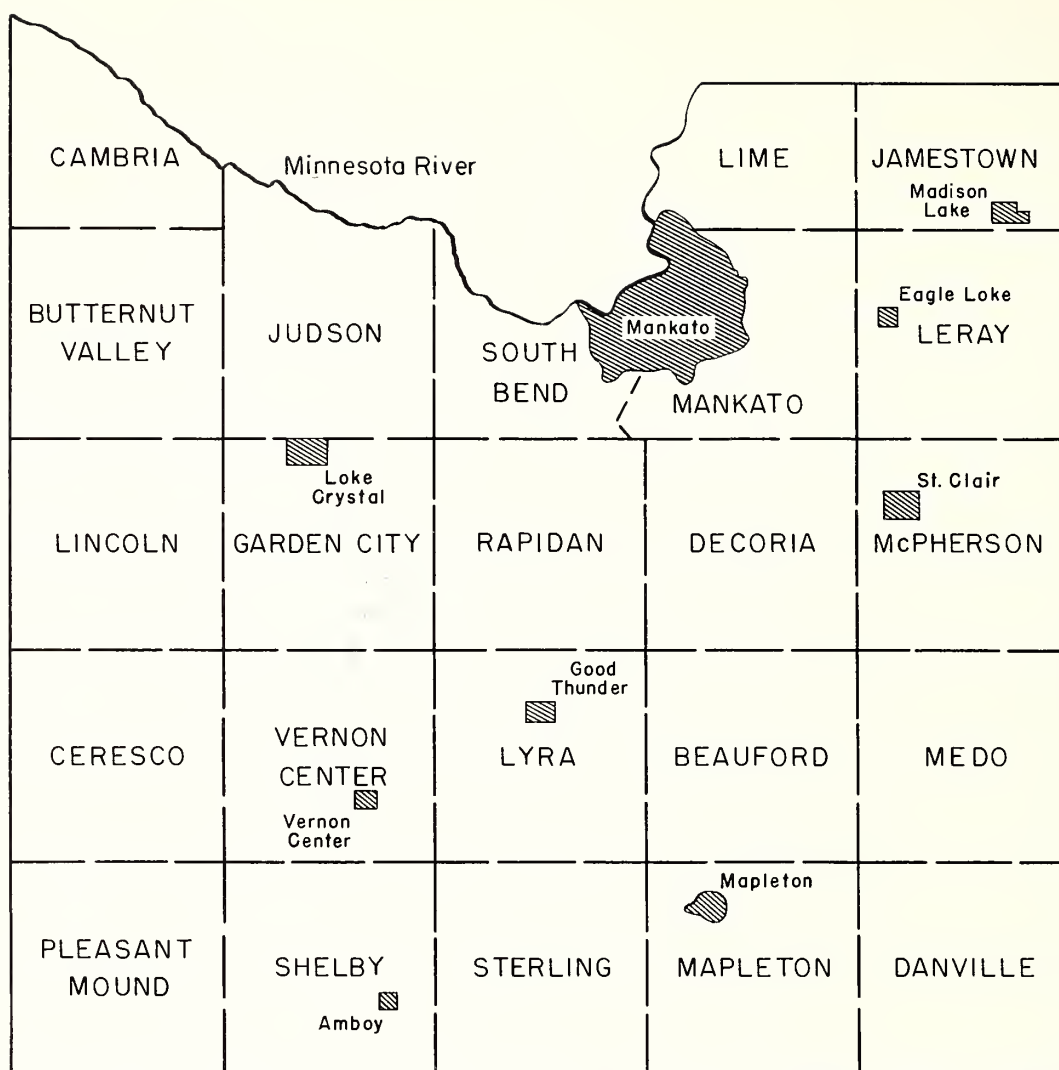
The two functions of county government were immediately evident when Blue Earth was founded. It was to serve as an agent of the state to decentralize and adapt state law in the locality, and at the same time it was to be used as an instrument for local self-government. The duties of county officers and the scope of the county's activity were circumscribed in detail by both constitutional and statutory law. But that fact did not stop the community from appropriating the county for its own use. The same rugged independence which prompted the first county board to try a divorce case and render a judgment before discovering it had no jurisdiction (and also a local justice to replevy a human being) guaranteed as well that county government would not be an empty gesture toward local democracy.

Later developments have further shaped the character of county government. In the first place, the county has been made increasingly responsive to federal action; only the legal theory of state sovereignty prevents its being called the child of the federal government as well as of the state. Two cases in point are the county agent and social welfare programs. Second, as a unit of local government, the county has been preserved with a rustic flavor, chiefly because of the continued predominance of rural interests both in the state legislature and on the county board. As a result, the rural touch is carried over into current policy, and perseveres in the fundamental

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<sup>1</sup>A detailed listing of state and federal agencies will be found in the appendix.

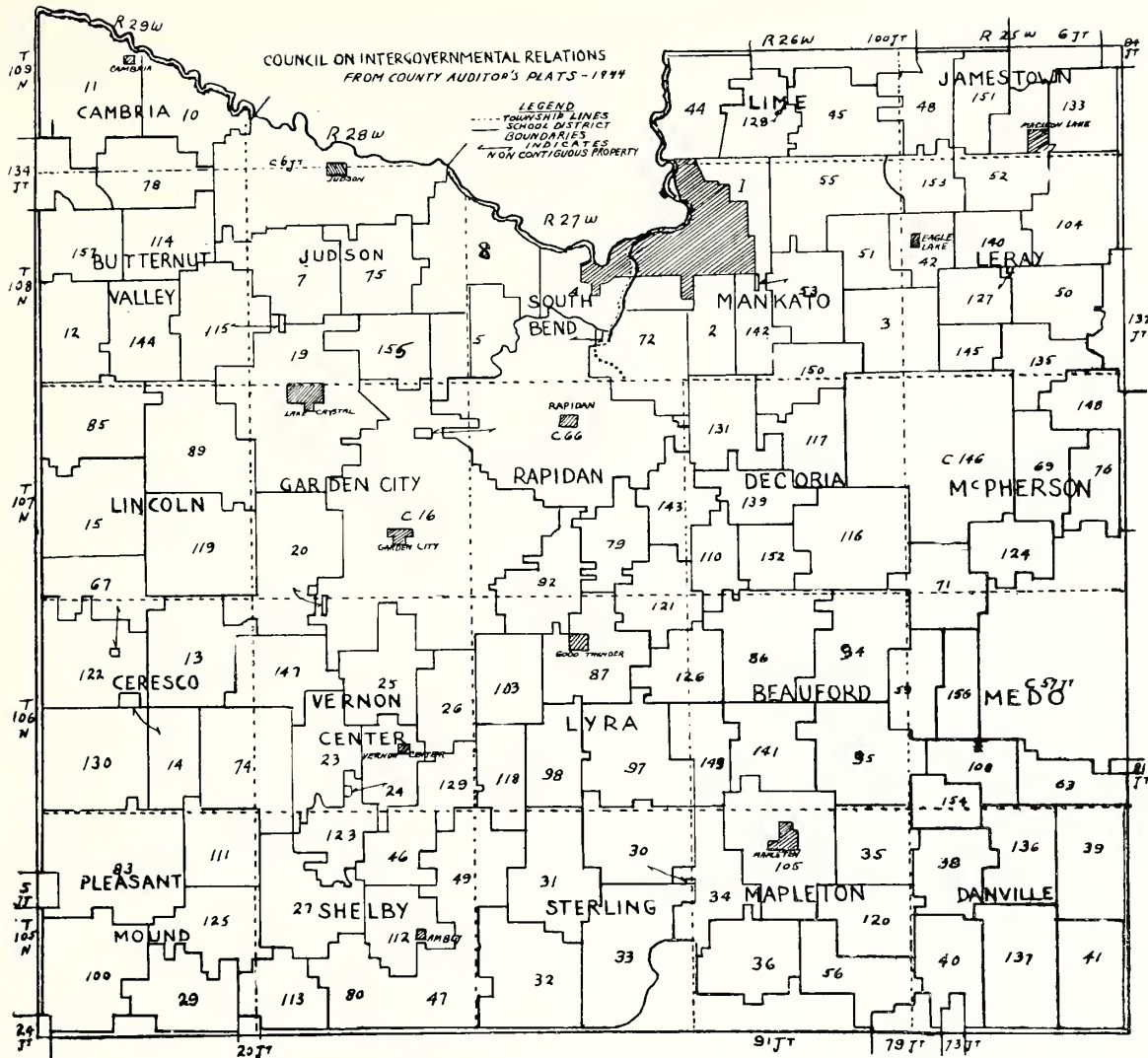




Except for the very northeast tip occupied by the Irish, the northeast quarter of the county is inhabited largely by the Germans. The Catholics among them are located principally in the north and east, in the townships of Lime, Mankato, McPherson, and the northern part of LeRay; while the Lutheran element settled in Decoria, Rapidan, Danville, and the central part of Lyra. Germans also took root in two other sections of the county: the Catholics in Mapleton, and the Lutherans in Pleasant Mound in the greater part of Ceresco.

The Welsh settled first in South Bend, and then spread out west and north through the townships of Judson and Cambria, and into the northern parts of the townships of Garden City and Butternut Valley. The Scotch became located in the southern half of Beauford and in the eastern part of Sterling; while the Irish claimed the township of Jamestown and the northern part of LeRay.

Medo Township, the western half of Sterling, and the eastern half of Shelby, together with the southern half of Butternut Valley and the northwest tip of Lincoln, were taken over by the Norwegians. The Swedes, on the other hand, settled in the bottom lands along the Minnesota River.



There is a further explanation for the rural character of county government—the growth of municipal and school government in Mankato which, to a large extent, has made it unnecessary for county government to adjust to the problems of an urban community. At the same time, the county has responded to the growing need of the rural population for a unit of government which is larger and more effective than the township.

To an observer at the local level, the evidence of the county's rural bent is unmistakable. Most noticeable is the homespun atmosphere which pervades the courthouse and the meetings of the county board. Further, there is the prevailing attitude among county officials that their first obligation is to the rural community while Mankato is to be treated as an area apart, and the special purview of its city government. Contributing to that attitude are several facts: the school district of Mankato is constituted outside the jurisdiction of the county superintendent of schools; a

separation has always been made between the construction and maintenance of city and county roads; and the county by reason of statutory and constitutional requirements has to be specially concerned with such matters as agricultural extension, weed inspection, drainage, and rural library service.

Nevertheless, the rural side of county government can be easily exaggerated. Most of its functions are of a general nature, there being at least eight categories in which the county is of service to the entire community: (1) The enforcement of ordinary civil and criminal laws. (2) The collection of tax levies and the equalization of assessments. (3) The conduct of county, state, and federal elections. (4) The registration of titles and other legal documents. (5) The issuing of hunting, fishing, marriage, and other licenses. (6) The provision of nursing and other public health facilities. (7) The administration of relief and welfare programs. (8) The construction and maintenance of county roads.

As far as organization is concerned, county government in Blue Earth follows the familiar pattern: a large assortment of elective officials, only the rudiments of a legislative organ, no central executive or administrative body, and accumulating evidences of unplanned growth and makeshift adjustments.

As noted in Figure 6, sixteen county officers are elected. Ten of the offices date from 1853, when the county was established under the territorial laws of Minnesota. Four more were added in 1858 when Minnesota's admission to the union prompted a reorganization of local government. The last two—the superintendent of schools and the court commissioner—were created during the following decade. Significantly, however, all county offices established since that time have been made appointive, beginning with the overseer of the poor farm in 1868, and continuing through the county health officer, the weed inspector, the agricultural agent, the home demonstration agent, the two county public health nurses, the executive secretary and staff of the welfare board, and the county librarian.

The system of electing sixteen separate officeholders is but one element of the disintegrated pattern of county government. Actually, the county is less a governmental unit than a loose collection of offices, each constructed around a function or a group of functions which the state legislature over the years has deemed necessary. The board of commissioners is hardly a legislative body; it exercises only limited discretion. And beyond the limited range of its administrative assignments, it is also not an executive body. The remaining eleven county officers are not responsible to the board; their duties and even their salary schedules are prescribed by the state constitution or by the state legislature.

In fact, county government in Blue Earth could well be a sorry affair if it were not for the *modus vivendi* its officers have arrived at. Among those whose functions are more or less independent, the rule is courtesy and a live-and-let-live policy. But among those whose duties are interrelated (for example, the auditor, the treasurer, and the county board), there is an ingrained sense of harmony produced by long years of association in office and by the obvious necessity of cooperative action. Newcomers to office soon realize that peace in the courthouse family is a matter of first principle.

No better example of courthouse conduct could be found than that of Bert Lee, county auditor for twenty-five or more years. During his period in office, Lee has managed to remain on good terms not only with the county board, with whom he works closely, but with the whole group of county officials, many of whom have held office as long as he. His success has depended on such obvious personal virtues as friendliness and honesty; but it has also demanded a willingness to lead a passive official life and to tolerate mediocrity.

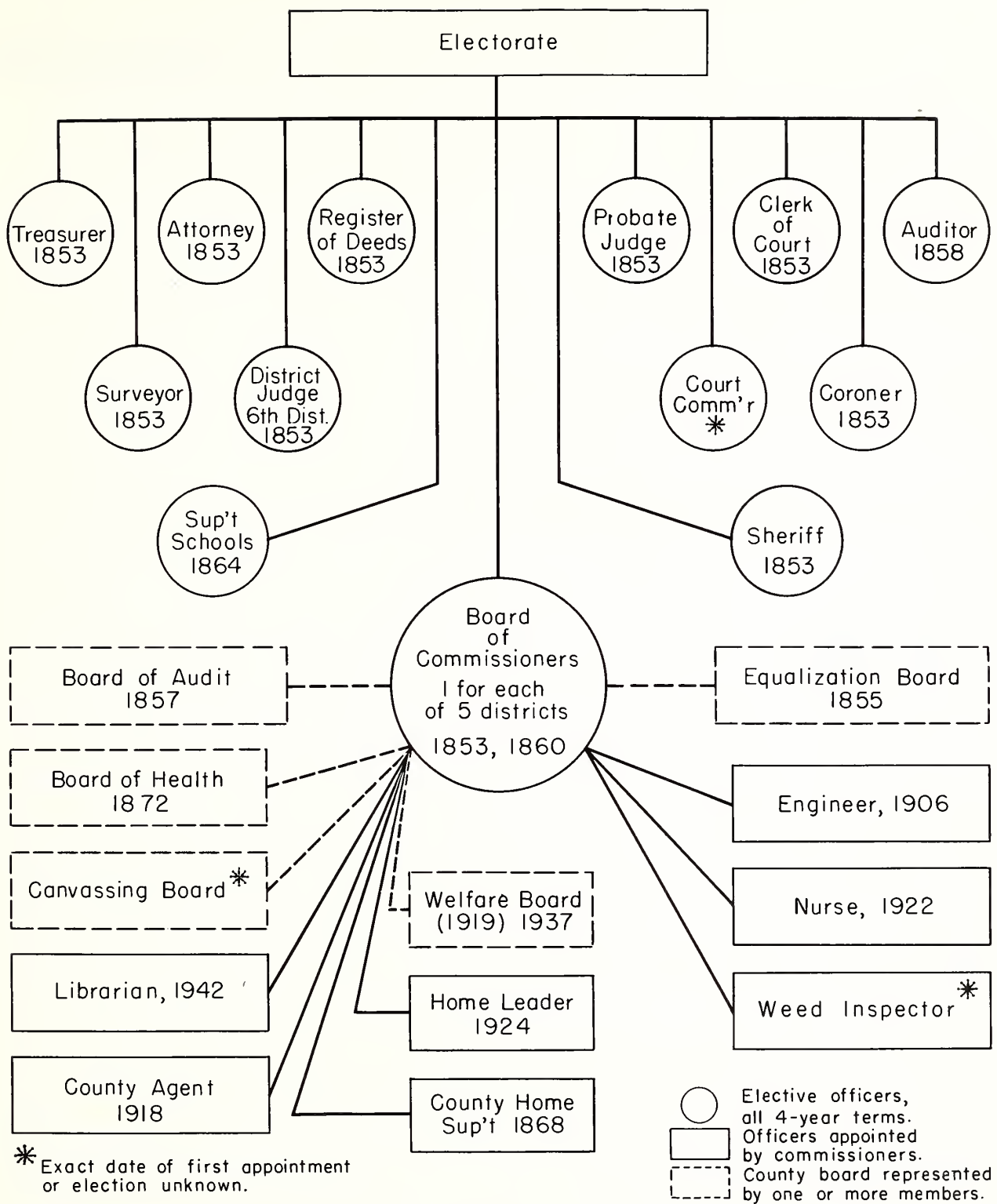


FIGURE 6. ORGANIZATION AND GROWTH OF BLUE EARTH COUNTY GOVERNMENT, 1853-1945  
(Total County Personnel in 1945: 17 Elective, 60 Permanent, 145 Part Time)



Two cities in the Blue Earth County area have been incorporated by the state legislature: Mankato as a city of the third class (population ranging between 10,000 and 20,000); and Lake Crystal as a city of the fourth class (population below 10,000). Both operate under the commission form of government, and under home-rule charters which supposedly ensure them considerable self-government in all matters of purely local concern.

With minor exceptions, the governmental organization of the two cities is alike. In Mankato, the mayor is an integral part of a five-man council whose members are elected at large. (See Figure 7.) Although designated president of the council, chief magistrate, and executive officer of the city, the mayor has only one vote in council proceedings and is not authorized to exercise a veto. With the other commissioners, the mayor is assigned to head one of the five administrative departments. In Lake Crystal, the mayor has veto power but not the vote. Instead of five major departments, there are six; and an extra commissioner is elected to the council.

Both cities elect two additional officers: Mankato, a judge and a special judge of the municipal court; Lake Crystal, two justices of the peace. The councils of both cities are vested with the power to appoint a panel of administrative officers, among them clerk, treasurer, assessor, engineer, police chief, fire chief, attorney, and health officer.

Aside from their form and administrative organization, the governments of the two cities have little in common. Lake Crystal is a village that aspired to become a city. Its population only slightly exceeds that of Mapleton, the county's largest village; its eleven full- and part-time employees are about twice the average number employed by the villages, but less than one tenth of those on the Mankato payroll. Its council, like those of the villages, meets regularly just once a month.

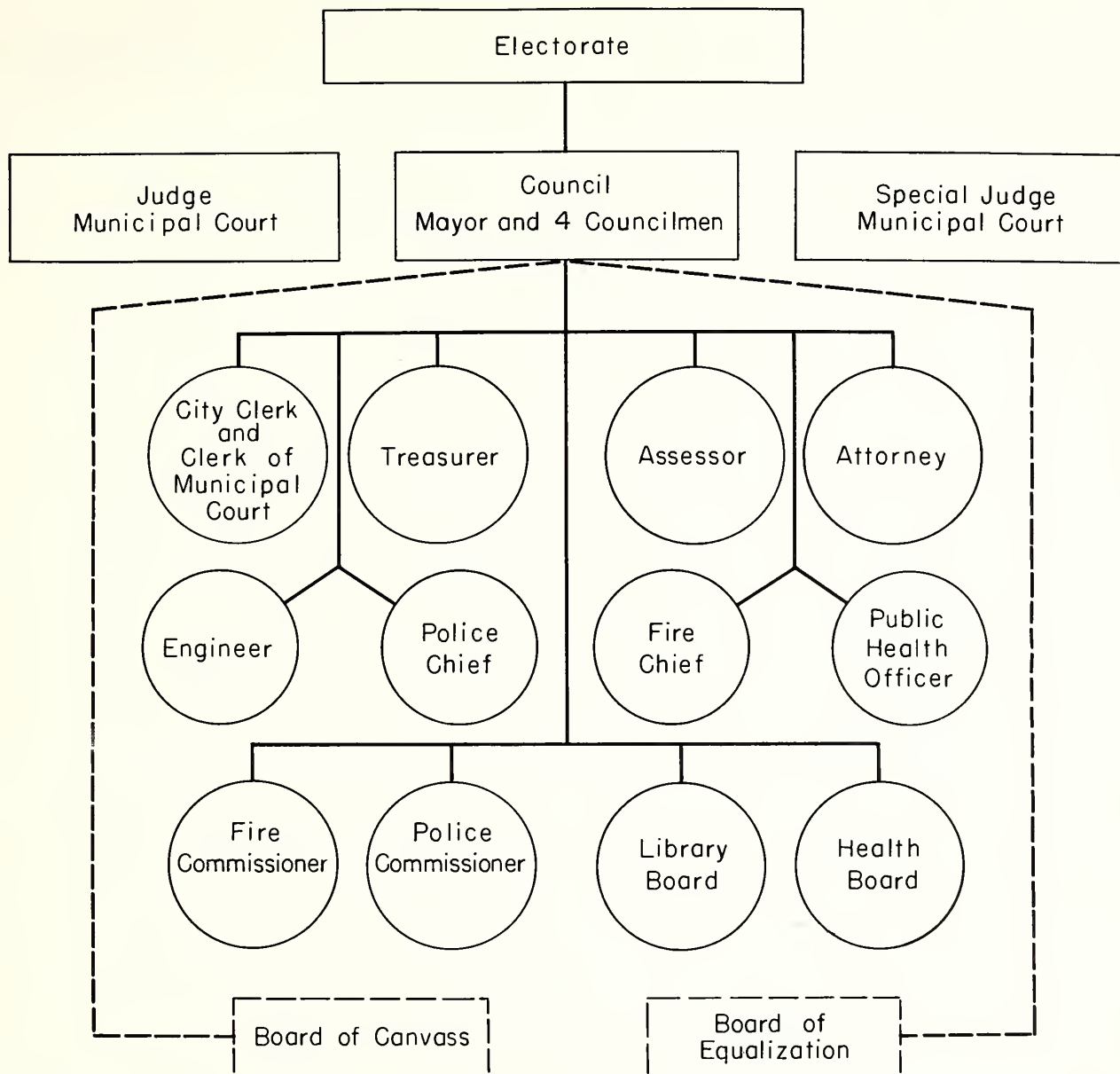
From the outset, Mankato has been the county's leading municipality. Incorporated as a city in 1868, one year before Lake Crystal was laid out as a townsite, it has since outstripped its diminutive competitor in every respect. Even in governmental organization, Mankato has assumed the lead. When the city adopted the commission plan in 1911, Lake Crystal followed suit within a year.

However, there still remain certain elements in Mankato's city government that are reminiscent of the small town. The office of the mayor continues on a part-time basis, with a yearly salary of \$900; only a person of considerable leisure and/or civic pride is able to make much of the position. The commission form of government itself is a carry-over from the days when it was possible for business and professional men to administer the city's affairs in their off hours; and there are enough evidences in the patchwork construction of streets, sewage disposal system, and water works to show that the arrangement was never adequate. Further proof is that a former city engineer who held his job for nearly twenty years, had no professional training.

Within recent years there has been a growing realization among Mankato's business leaders and professional people that the city has attained the size where efficiency and qualified personnel are necessary. Widespread support has been given the move to introduce a city-manager form of government, with successive proposals going down to defeat only because of the subtle strategy of the opponents; in both cases, the question was pushed to a referendum vote during general elections, when it was much more difficult to obtain the necessary majority of four sevenths of those voting in the election than it would have been at a special election.

A notable feature of the city's political life is the meager reliance placed upon party or highly organized pressure. There are other reasons than the obvious one of the legal ban against party designations on local election ballots. The city is small





\* The mayor supervises the departments of health, sanitation, police and general welfare; 1 councilman, accounts and finances; 1 councilman, parks, public buildings, grounds and fire protection; 1 councilman, water works and sewers; and 1 councilman, streets and alleys.

FIGURE 7. ORGANIZATION OF CITY GOVERNMENT IN MANKATO, 1945 (Personnel: 7 Elective, 102 Full Time, and 25 Part Time)\*

and has little of the impersonal atmosphere that makes disciplined group action almost a necessity in larger communities. Officials are well known and can be approached at any time and in any number of places—at the golf club or in their business offices if not at the city hall. Further, there are no militant minorities, no slum areas of any size, only a moderate amount of union activity, election at large rather than by wards, and a negligible amount of social stratification.

The city's most bitter political battles are those which revolve around personalities. The council has always been at the center of sharp controversy; and few in the community regard the mayor as anything but fair game for attack.

Despite the somewhat antiquated machinery of government and the frictions among official personnel, the city of Mankato has continued to operate fairly effectively. Press, citizenry, and the business community have been too alert to endure gross inefficiencies for long. Finances have been consistently in good order; civic facilities have been steadily improved.

Seven villages have been incorporated within Blue Earth County: Mapleton (1878), Amboy (1887), Madison Lake (1891), Good Thunder (1897), Vernon Center (1899), Eagle Lake (1902), and St. Clair (1907).

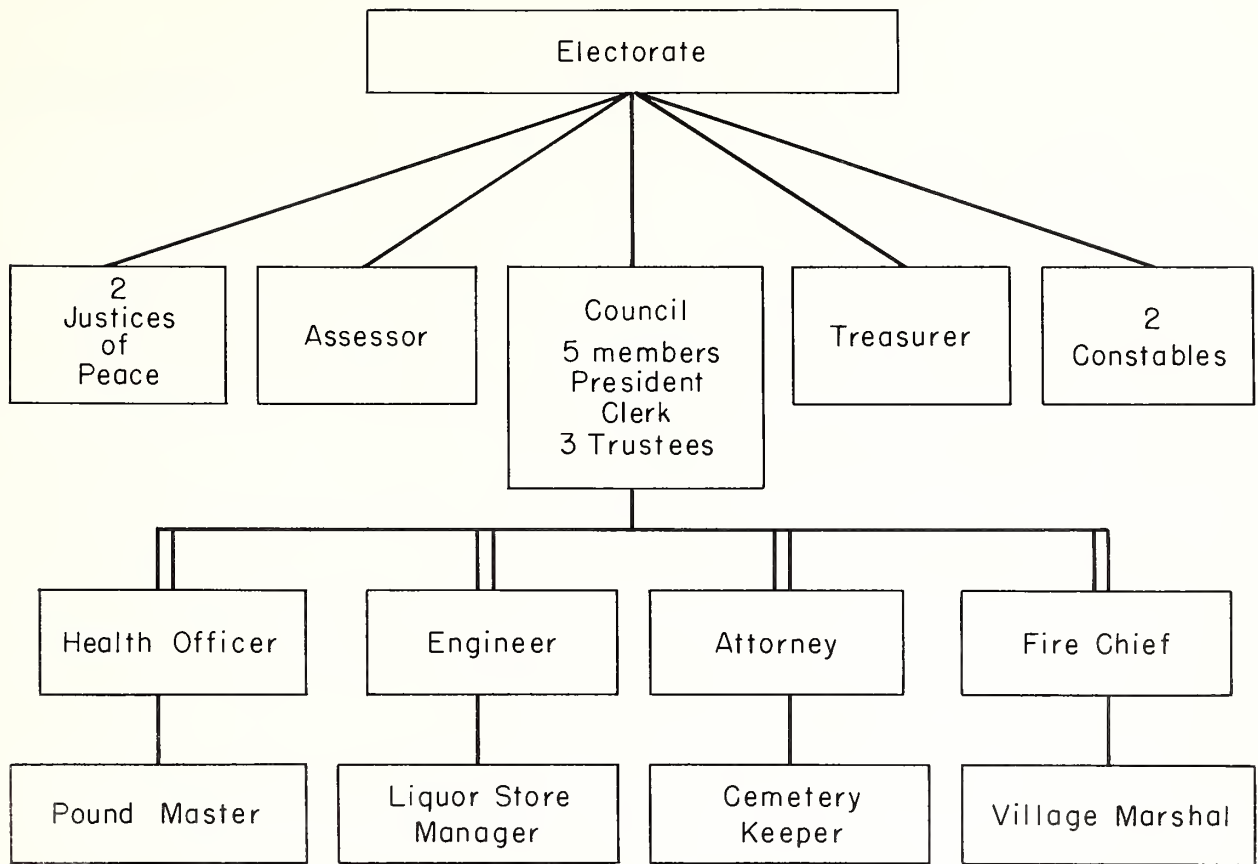
The elective offices of the village are similar to those of the town: a council of five members (mayor, clerk, and three trustees), two constables, two justices of the peace, a treasurer, and an assessor. (See Figure 8.) Villages, more frequently than towns, provide for additional personnel to serve under the direction of the council, the most common among them being the street commissioner, fire chief, manager of the liquor store, health officer, and marshal.

The villages of Blue Earth County, however, rarely choose their full complement of elective or appointive personnel. In 1945, all but two omitted the office of justice of the peace; and all but one, the office of constable. Few villages had more than four appointed officers. One, however, elected a treasurer, an assessor, and full council.

An enumeration of some of the other arrangements existing in 1945 will complete the picture of the informality of village government. For example, Vernon Center had only one constable, and he served also as street commissioner. One of the village council members was also employed as manager of the municipal liquor store, and the health officer served both Vernon Center and Amboy.

Again, the village of Mapleton had no constable, and its village attorney doubled as village assessor. In Amboy, there was but one justice of the peace, who also acted as village assessor; the manager of the municipal liquor store served as councilman; and the village engineer held two additional jobs, one as county surveyor, the other as city engineer for Lake Crystal.

Historically, there has been little change in the governmental organization of the seven villages. One trend is the gradual decrease in the number of local justices and constables, and the growing number of managers of municipal liquor stores. The latter can readily be explained in terms of the windfall profits which one village after another has been realizing on the new enterprise—in many instances enough to cover the village's expenditures for the entire year. Law enforcement, on the other hand, has gradually been turned over to county and city officers, with Mankato's municipal



MADISON LAKE VILLAGE 1945

VERNON CENTER VILLAGE 1945

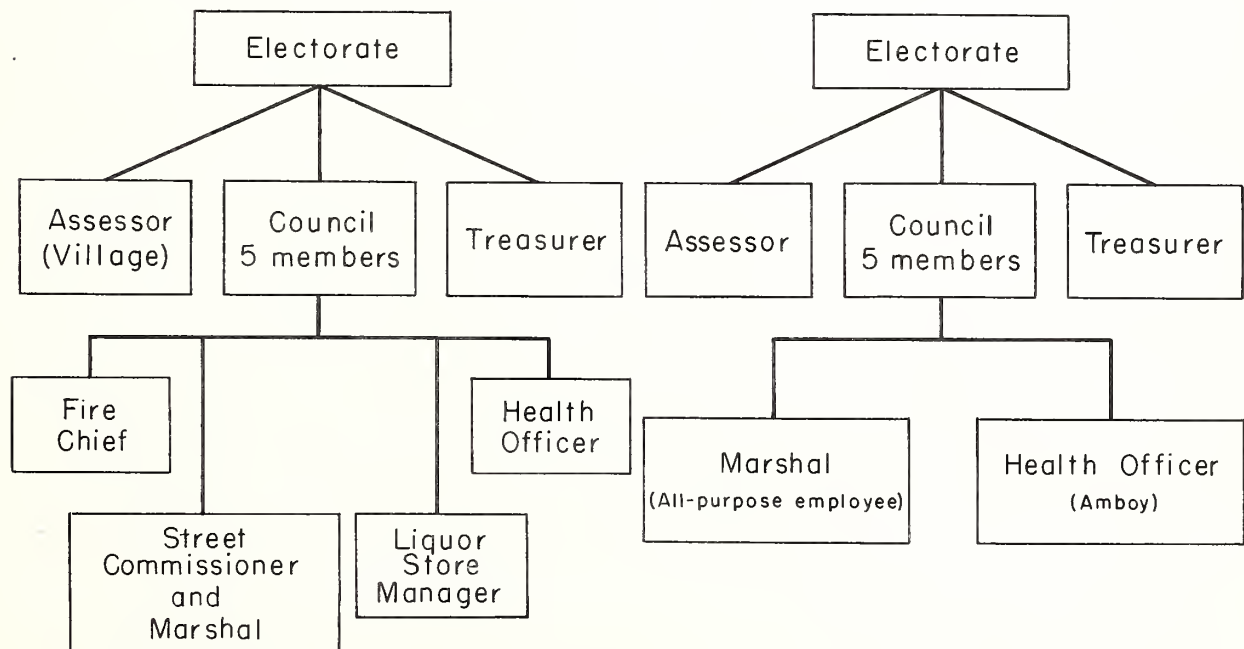


FIGURE 8. STRUCTURE OF A FULLY ORGANIZED VILLAGE IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY

court handling most of the cases formerly heard before outlying justices of the peace.<sup>2</sup>

In nearly every other respect, the villages carry on their government much as they did when first incorporated. Their services in each instance represent what the several communities consider to be their "minimum daily requirement." Their officers attend to their duties perfunctorily and as time allows. It is still necessary, for the conduct of village business, to rouse the mayor from his afternoon nap, or to interrupt the treasurer from his work as pharmacist at the local drugstore. Council meetings are held but once a month; and the only person likely to make his "office" at the village hall is the otherwise unemployed marshal.

In addition to these villages, there are a number of "settlements," or unorganized clusters of population, which dot the countryside and which usually go by the name of the townships in which they are found. Many of them are as large or larger than some of the villages; but unlike the latter, they do not have legal status or the power to tax. Any project they may undertake is completely informal and voluntary. In contrast to the villages, they remain a part of the township and subject to its government.

Twenty-three townships have been constituted as units of local government, and as such are called "towns" in the laws.<sup>3</sup> Seventeen of them coincide with the familiar "six-by-six mile" outlines of the congressional township. It should be noted that incorporated cities and villages do not fall within the jurisdiction of the town.

Town government is uniformly based on the annual meeting in early spring at which officers, up to the legal quota of eleven, are elected to carry on throughout the year. They include a board of three supervisors, an assessor, treasurer, clerk, overseer of highways, two justices of the peace, and two constables. (See Figure 9.)

As in the case of the villages, not all of these offices are filled. Supervisors, assessors, treasurers, and clerks are always elected, but practice varies considerably among the twenty-three towns in the selection of justices, overseers, and constables. The same holds true in the choice of appointive personnel, the most commonly named being weed inspectors, town hall managers, road overseers, and cemetery keepers. Since both elective and appointive positions are of a part-time nature, there is a considerable amount of the "doubling up" already seen among village officers.

The chief services of the town include the maintenance of its own system of roads, assessment of property for purposes of taxation, regulation of dance halls and taverns, weed inspection, control of animals running at large, and a limited amount of public health work and law enforcement.

It is not easy to assess the changes that have occurred in town government over the past eighty years. While it is safe to conclude that much less of the community's total stake in government centers in town affairs, and that the relative importance of the town as a unit of government is decreasing, it is worth noting that for the past

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<sup>2</sup>Interestingly enough, whereas nearly all misdemeanors are tried before the municipal court, it was the county rather than the city attorney who was most frequently called in as prosecutor. The reason was simply that highway and local police regarded the county attorney as the more competent lawyer.

<sup>3</sup>In the order of their creation they are: 1858, Butternut Valley, Ceresco, Danville, Jamestown, Garden City, Judson, Lime, Mankato, Pleasant Mound, Shelby, South Bend, Sterling, and Vernon Center; 1860, LeRay; 1861, Mapleton; 1863, McPherson and Medo; 1865, Lincoln and Rapidan; 1866, Beauford and Lyra; 1867, Cambria and Decoria.



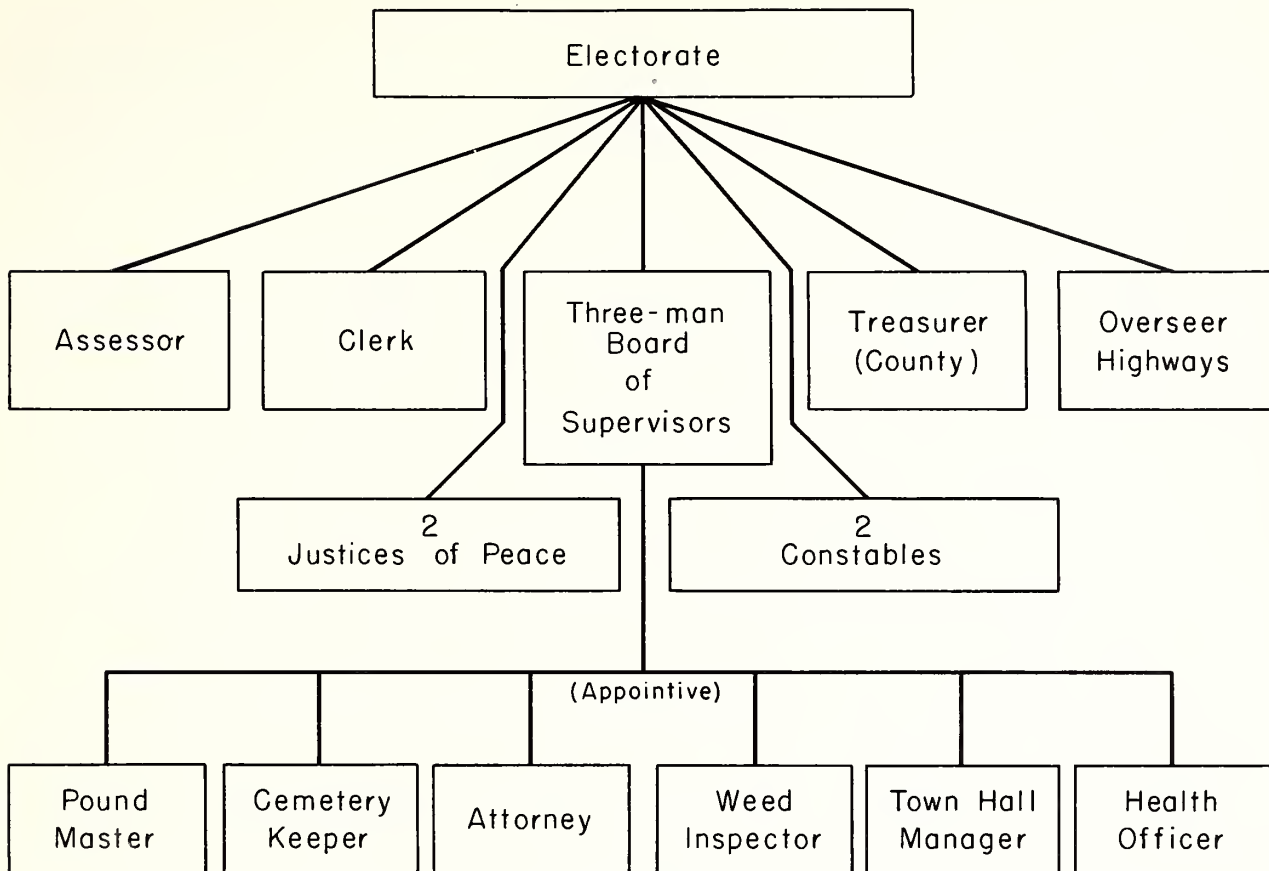


FIGURE 9. STRUCTURE OF A FULLY ORGANIZED TOWNSHIP IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY

seventy-five years the towns have received the same share (roughly 9 per cent) of the total revenue gained from the local property tax. In absolute figures this has meant an increase in revenue from \$10 to \$130,000.

Attendance at town meetings, though small, appears to be no less, proportionately, than in 1870; and the roster of town officers still includes the prominent members of each town community. One of the three supervisors of the town of Decoria, for example, has been a leader in both AAA and REA work within the county. In the town of Vernon Center, the supervisor and the assessor are brothers, both ranked among the prosperous and well-educated farmers in the township.

Almost without exception, the local residents are anxious to preserve the town form of government, although their attitudes and their reasons vary. One, a supervisor in the town of Mankato, speaks for the large number whose attachment is chiefly emotional when he propounds the evils of centralization and demands a reawakening which will make the town the center of local government. Another, the assessor of Vernon Center, regards town government as a continuous reminder to the people of their obligations as citizens. Although fully sympathetic with the system, he is not blind to the weaknesses of township government—antiquated laws governing assessment procedures and the continued maintenance by the towns of the more heavily traveled roads.

School districts comprise the largest class of local government units. In 1945, there were 122 located entirely within the county and another 12 which overlapped



county lines in such a way that they fell outside Blue Earth's jurisdiction. (See Figure 5.) The latter are omitted in the following discussion.

Three main types are distinguishable: (1) 112 "common" school districts which maintain ungraded elementary schools; (2) nine "independent" districts which operate graded elementary schools and/or high schools; (3) one "special" district (Mankato) which provides a number of graded elementary and secondary schools.

Districts of the first type operate uniformly with a three-man board (chairman, clerk, and treasurer) and come under the supervision of the county superintendent of schools. The remaining two types have their own superintendents who are chosen by the school boards and are responsible to them. The board members number six in the independent districts, eight in the special districts. Except for the difference in the number of board members and the slightly greater degree of flexibility allowed the special district, only a technical point of organization distinguishes the two types. The independent district is organized upon petition to the county board, while the special district is established under a charter granted by the state legislature.

The further classification into which the 112 common school districts have been placed by the state department of education (acting in conjunction with the county superintendent of schools) sheds some light on the character of rural school government in the county. In 1945, 53 districts had been rated "superior accredited" on the basis of some additional facility they provide (e.g., more than one teacher and more than one room) and were therefore eligible for increased amounts of state aid. However, only 17 of these actually operated a school; the remainder had closed down their own plant and were transporting their students to districts with superior ratings. Another 56 districts had been classified as "unaccredited but aided"; these are the familiar one-room schoolhouse districts, whose status still merits state aid. Only three districts had fallen so low as to earn the rating of "unaccredited and unaided."

The districts which are "closed and transporting" do not cease functioning as governmental units. It may be that their buildings have been shut down for one or more years during which there were too few pupils in the district to make it feasible to continue operating; or they may have been abandoned—perhaps sold to the nearest farmers for use as machine sheds. But such districts continue to elect their three-man boards, go on taxing their constituencies, and eagerly accept funds from the state department of education.

The continued existence of this legion of common school districts, some of them comprising no more than four sections of land and containing no more than twelve children of school age, is likely to amaze anyone who is not familiar with the inconvenient location of roads and rivers in the state or with the stubbornness with which Minnesota's rural parents insist on the control of their children's education. But the drive is continually on to reduce the number of common school districts.

There are some evidences that the campaign has met with success. Historically school districts are on the decrease: there were 128 districts in 1875, 143 in 1910, and 122 in 1945.\* Of the 21 districts dropping out of existence between 1910 and 1945, about half were absorbed into the county's five consolidated districts, all of which were organized during that period. The frequency with which rural districts have been resorting to the device of closing their schools and transporting their students lends strength to the hope that school organization may be streamlined in the near future. However, there are some other considerations. In the first place, consolidation has not entirely proved itself to the satisfaction of rural school taxpayers. It has been

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\*Editors' Note: And 58 in 1955.

found that not only total costs but also individual tax burdens have risen, and the latter beyond the point where added pain can be offset by the pleasure of demonstrable improvement. Second, the school boards have been shrewd enough to realize that by closing and transporting they stand to gain financially: their costs decline sharply, but somehow the complex formulas by which state aids are determined continue to produce gratifying results.<sup>4</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the county superintendent does not exercise jurisdiction over the independent and special districts, whose relationship with the state department of education is direct. The superintendent of each district is immediately responsible for keeping both school attendance and financial records, for submitting the required reports, and for maintaining educational standards.

School government and administration in the ten larger districts is quite a different matter from what it is among the common school districts. The most obvious contrasts lie in the quality of academic and administrative personnel, and in the scale of their operations. Each of the nine independent districts maintains a multiple-room building which houses a graded elementary school and also—except in the case of Vernon Center—a high school. Mankato's special-district system is the most elaborate. It includes four elementary schools, two junior high schools, and a new million-dollar high school.

In addition to their resident enrollments, the independent districts and especially the Mankato district absorb a large percentage of the elementary pupils who are transported from closed rural school districts, together with all the high school students of the county not enrolled in private academies or in secondary schools of neighboring counties. For each nonresident student they enroll, the districts exact a small tuition fee from the school units to which they extend their services.

It should be kept in mind that a sizable percentage of the county's children are educated in parochial schools. In Mankato alone, Catholic and Lutheran schools account for an estimated 900 of the county's total elementary and high school enrollment—about 6000. It should also be remembered that the parents of these children are obligated to pay public school taxes, although the only relief they secure from the state in the support of their religious schools is that of tax exemption of school property. On the other hand, parochial schools are entitled to almost complete freedom from state control, the important "catch" being the state's weapon of accreditation. In order to assure their pupils the benefits of accreditation, the various denominations have made strenuous attempts to conform to the requirements which govern the administration of public schools, and they welcome the annual visits of the county superintendent to their schools.

Another important factor in the county's educational system is the location in Mankato of one of the state's six teachers colleges. The influence of the college on school administration in the area is felt in a number of ways: through its alumni who take local teaching jobs, and through conferences and institutes. In addition, the college's training school absorbs several hundred of the county's elementary pupils.

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<sup>4</sup>Examples of such shrewdness go beyond the school boards. There are the interesting cases of district-jumping by individual farmers who want either to avoid the high tax rate of their own district or to come within a jurisdiction appealing more to their own interests. To accomplish the exchange, the individual petitions the county board for a redistricting of his own land. Each case is handled on its merits, with no established principles or precedent. If allowed, the change is duly entered by the county auditor in his book of plats, and a new "island" appears on the district landscape.



## STATE CONTROL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government in Blue Earth County is not always or entirely "self" government; enough has been said by this time to make it clear that local units operate within a perimeter of state control.

There are three sides to this perimeter: constitutional, legislative, and administrative. Minnesota's constitution outlines the structure of local government in terms varying in degree of generality. For example, there is one clause stating that "provision shall be made by law for the election of such county and township officers as may be necessary," and another requiring each county to elect a probate judge. The same holds true of constitutional provisions relating to the operation of local units. Section 5 of Article XI holds that any county or township organization shall have such powers of local taxation as may be prescribed by law; while Section 15 of Article IX forbids any local unit to aid railroads by becoming indebted to an amount exceeding 5 per cent of its assessed valuation.<sup>5</sup> All told, however, specific references in the constitution are too few and too incomplete to serve as continuous measures of control; and the role of the constitution as a control is limited to preserving the broad structural and operational outlines of local government.

Statutory control has proved much more effective—in fact, so much so that two constitutional amendments have been added to curb its abuse by the state legislature. One is in the form of a prohibition against "special" legislation adopted in 1892, followed six years later by a municipal home-rule amendment applying only to cities and villages.

Before 1892, the community had taken special legislation for granted. In February 1864, it was noted casually in the local press that "J. A. Wiswell had a bill enacted by the legislature changing the name of the town of Watonwan to Garden City." In that same session, the legislature had also authorized Blue Earth County to issue \$10,000 in bonds for the construction of local bridges. Two years later it put its stamp of approval on Mankato's decision to float bonds for school purposes, and then decided at its next session, in 1867, to merge the city's two school districts into one special district.

Not all special legislation affecting the community was as generally acceptable as the few samples given above. In many instances, special legislation became identified with special interests, as was the case in 1861, when the county's rural delegation attempted to push through a bill changing the county seat from Mankato to Garden City. Frequent incidents of this sort were by themselves enough to rally support behind the two constitutional amendments which followed. But there were some additional factors: the growing inconvenience of working through a legislature which was constantly adding to its membership and range of concern, the lessening in the feeling of intimacy among early legislators,<sup>6</sup> and the rapid development of local government and community pride.

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<sup>5</sup>Section 15 was added in 1879, nine years too late to discourage the city of Mankato and six of the county's towns from voting a sizable bonus to the Chicago and Milwaukee Railroad Company as an incentive to extend its road into the county. Mankato contributed its part by floating \$65,000 in bonds, and the six towns followed suit with issues totaling \$69,000.

<sup>6</sup>In the state's early years, the legislature included among its members a number of men who, like Parsons K. Johnson, one of the first settlers to arrive in Blue Earth County, had left St. Paul to found pioneer communities.

The amendment against special legislation has not done much to curb the legislature's power over local units. True, the practice of issuing separate volumes of laws, one general and one special, has been discontinued, and care is taken to phrase statutes in more general terms. But Minnesota lawmakers have resorted to the old device of classification which enables them to control the individual units and yet pay lip service to the rule of generality.

There was an extra touch to the history of special legislation as it related to cities and villages. After the amendment of 1892, the legislature found it particularly difficult to draw up general statutes which would be adequate to handle the problems of cities and villages, most of which had been incorporated individually by the legislature and therefore varied considerably as to the charter provisions under which they operated. Rather than risk confusion, the legislature for a while did nothing and allowed municipal problems to accumulate.

To solve this difficulty, the second amendment was finally adopted in 1898, allowing cities and villages to vote themselves home-rule charters and thenceforth to enact such local legislation as they found necessary—subject always to the test of conformity with the laws of the state. Further, to expedite matters, the amendment provided a fourfold classification of cities according to population, and authorized the legislature to enact "general" legislation within each of these categories.

It was under the terms of this amendment that the cities of Mankato and Lake Crystal enacted their home-rule charters and proceeded to adopt the commission form of government. Both cities continue to operate under the "protection" of these charters—the irony being that at any time the two cities may be reached by special legislation. For example, Chapter 230 of the Laws of 1939 (amending the statutes which authorized the creation of a utilities commission in villages and in cities of the fourth class) was clearly designed solely for the city of Lake Crystal.

The conclusion with respect to statutory control is that the legislature remains capable of dealing with local units of government either individually or collectively as circumstances may warrant. But recent experience has left Blue Earth officials with little reason to fear legislative action in either category. From the viewpoint of the state's less urbanized counties, a satisfactory balance has been struck in the legislature between state and local interests; general legislation has tended to be more often permissive than restrictive in character. Also, most of the special legislation affecting the county is enacted upon local initiative and only upon assurance of local support.

Nevertheless, enough legislation has been allowed over the years so that local units are currently hedged in by a host of statutory do's and don't's. Local officers must adhere rigidly to a prescribed calendar of operations, only part of which has been reproduced in the accompanying schedule. So numerous have these provisions become that the Booth Printing Company, a subsidiary of the Mankato Free Press, makes a small business of assembling and publishing them in the form of handbooks for town and village officers. The manual is seven inches long, five inches wide, and an inch thick.

It will be noted from the attached calendar that there are a number of instances in which local functionaries are made responsible to administrative officers of the state. These instances are representative of the third type of control which the state exercises over local government.

Administrative supervision of local units in Blue Earth County appeared almost immediately as a companion-piece to statutory control. By itself, legislative action was not enough; and the county was too distant and too often delinquent in its own



CALENDAR OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY  
August 1940-July 1941

August 2: The boards of education in school districts operating under special law and having a population of 10,000 to 20,000 (Mankato) shall meet to close unfinished business. (Laws 1939, Ch. 107, Sec. 2)

August 15: The last day in villages incorporated under the 1885 law (all except Mapleton) for the council to pass a resolution determining the tax levy for village purposes. (Laws 1885, Ch. 145, Sec. 34)

August 26: On or before this date, the state commissioner of taxation shall receive from each county auditor a complete abstract of all personal and real property in the county as equalized by the county board of equalization together with a printed or typewritten copy of the proceedings of the board. (Mason's Minn. Statutes, Sec. 2365-1)

September 1: The last day for the recorders of villages operating under the 1885 law to certify to the county auditor a statement of taxes levied and assessed by their councils, and a list of names of owners of personal property in the village. (Laws 1885, Ch. 145, Sec. 45)

October 10: On or before this date taxes voted by cities, villages, towns, and school districts shall be certified by the clerks to the county auditor. (Mason's Minn. Statutes, Secs. 1225, 2058)

October 15: The latest date upon which the period of employment of a county weed inspector may end. (Mason's Minn. Statutes, 1938 Suppl., Sec. 6164-2)

November 2: Election of members of the school board in county school districts. (Mason's Minn. Statutes, 1938 Suppl., Sec. 2780)

December 3: Election day for villages. (Laws 1939, Ch. 345)

January 10: The last day for the county attorney to send to the state attorney general a transcript of the register of criminal actions. (Mason's 1927, Sec. 928)

February 3: The police civil service commission in villages and cities (only Mankato) meets and selects a secretary. (Mason's, 1938 Suppl., Sec. 1933-50)

March 5: The county auditor shall report to the state superintendent of schools the apportionment of school funds. (Mason's 1927, Sec. 2997)

March 11: Annual town meetings. Town clerks shall immediately thereafter report on elections to the county auditor. (Laws 1939, Ch. 345)

April 1: Municipal elections in Mankato. The last day for the state auditor, treasurer, and highway commissioner to apportion state road and bridge fund among counties. The commissioner shall immediately send a statement to the county auditor. (Mason's 1938 Suppl., Sec. 2559)

May 10: Clerks shall give ten days' notice of annual meeting or election in independent school districts maintaining both graded elementary and high schools. (Laws 1939, Ch. 62)

June 23: Town, village and city boards of review shall meet to review assessments. (Mason's 1927, Sec. 2034)

July 10: Annual meeting of the county welfare board. (Laws 1939, Ch. 19)

duties to provide the state with the assurance it wanted of effective and uniform administration at the local level. One need only refer to contemporary complaints of state officials to judge the existing inadequacies of local government; from 1865 on, it was a rare annual report of the state auditor which did not plead for a county system of assessment to replace or to systematize the work of elected town appraisers.

The appointment in 1860 of a state school superintendent and of a state board of equalization gave a hint of the controls which were to come, although it was not until later decades that administrative supervision was begun in earnest. The year 1872 brought with it the establishment of the state board of health, an organization which soon afterwards was vested with powers of control over local boards of health. In 1878 the office of public examiner was created, and along with it a regular system of checking the financial operations of local government. In 1883 the state board of correction and charities was established, and in 1899 the state public library commission.

By 1910, the framework of the state's system of administrative control was nearly complete. The board of health and the board of corrections had both been reorganized and enlarged; the tax commission had become (in 1907) the perfected form of the earlier board of equalization; and the board of highway commissioners had begun in 1905 to administer the program of state aids. The major developments yet to take place were

administrative reorganizations and the perfecting of legal provisions under which the supervisory agencies were to operate.

It would require more space than is available here to list all the instances in which local government in Blue Earth County has been brought under supervision by the state's administrative agencies. It will suffice to cite a number of examples, pointing out at the same time several contrasting techniques.

The state department of education has chosen to carry out its supervisory work in a direct fashion, dispatching seven different inspectors into the community at least once each year. Their inspections cover rural schools and school buses; elementary graded schools and high schools; building arrangements and construction plans for all types of schools; vocational education programs; both school and public libraries; physical and health education classes in elementary and secondary schools; and special classes for handicapped children.

Financial audits are relied upon by a number of state agencies, among them the department of conservation which provides for an annual on-the-spot audit of the game and fish license accounts of the county auditor, and the office of the public examiner which requires an annual audit of all county finances and requests, but does not require, financial reports from all other local units.

The department of social security, in addition to its control over local appointments, uses both audit and direct inspection, employing separate investigators to spot-check the financial records and case methods of the county welfare board, and to inspect local jails and lockups.

Lastly, the department of health, headed by the board of health, is an example of an agency which is vested with far-ranging powers of regulation and supervision but prefers to rely upon friendly advice and suggestion. The exact nature of the department's relations with local government will be dealt with in later chapters.

#### FEDERAL INFLUENCE OVER LOCAL GOVERNMENT

To this point, the discussion seems to imply that the state is the only agent of central control acting upon local government. In point of fact, the growth of federal influence over local units has been one of the most striking developments in government at the community level.

Federal leadership asserted itself in Blue Earth County long before the depression ushered in the recent trend. The entire area was subject to territorial administration during the early years of its settlement, and the county was originally created as an instrument of the federal government. Even after Minnesota had been admitted to statehood in 1858, the federal government continued to exert an immediate and powerful influence over the decisions of local units. There was a dramatic example when the national army directed the community in its defense against the Indians; there were also subtle shapings of local policy which resulted from federal construction of military and post roads and from federal administration of the Winnebago Indian reservation.

Much of the active interest shown by the federal government in local affairs disappeared with the end of the Civil War and the closing of the local frontier. Not until then did the county enter the period of relative autonomy which so many of its present-day citizens have come to regard as the first and natural state of local government. This period, however, was to last but a short half-century. By 1918, the federal government was once more impinging directly upon local units in the Blue Earth area, first through the war program and second through the local appointment of a county agent. The latter brought with it the federal assistance promised under the

terms of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, and placed that particular area of county activity under the influence of an administrative agency of the federal government.

Despite its good start, the cooperative principle embodied in the county-agent plan made slow progress in the community; very shortly, it encountered suspicion and animosity. During the twenties, federal funds to assist in the support of a county health department were accepted but subsequently relinquished, and for two years of the depression, the county board would have nothing to do with federal grants for emergency relief. To the board, accepting such grants meant surrendering the birth-right of local government for a federal mess of pottage.

Governing bodies of other local units showed a similar reluctance to enter into federal "bargain" programs. PWA had few subscribers; Mankato's school board considered and then rejected an offer by that agency to contribute to the replacement of an out-worn high school building. (Two years later, the building burned to the ground and the community was left to assume the entire costs of constructing a new one.) At the time, the board was but giving expression to the community's desire to avoid entangling alliances. On the other hand, the board did accept Smith-Hughes and George-Deen funds in support of its training program in trades and distributive occupations, but it was the only board in the county to do so.

Wider acceptance was given to certain other cooperative federal programs such as the surplus commodities, penny-milk, and school-lunch projects. Opposition persisted, however, in spite of the fact that there was little evidence in any of these cases that the total of local power was being diminished.

Nevertheless, local opposition could not withstand the inexorable movement of the times. By the opening of World War II, the federal government had come to wield a direct and continuing influence upon all classes of local units except the towns, and upon a significant number of individual units within each class. Despite vigorous protests, the County Board of Commissioners was led by state action to an acceptance of the federal social security program. With less display of reluctance, it came to terms with WPA, the Surplus Commodities Corporation, and the Bureau of Public Roads. Meanwhile, the cities turned to WPA; Lake Crystal and several of the school districts to PWA; and both colleges in Mankato to NYA.

In summary, it is worth noting that federal influence upon local units has been achieved in nearly every instance through the largess of the national treasury. This is not surprising in view of the strong stand taken by local and state officials against any possible "intrusion" of federal interests. It is also not surprising when one remembers that legal precedent is opposed to any attempt by the federal government to coopt local government for its own purposes: local units were created by the state and, to judge from the silence of the Constitution on the matter, reserved to its authority. Human nature and the law being what they are, the simplest way for the federal government to proceed has been through the expedient of financial aids.

A second trend to note is that the federal government has gradually relaxed its policy of routing its dealings with local government through administrative agencies of the state. Beginning with the relief and public works programs of the early New Deal period, direct contact was established between federal agencies and local units—each case being covered, of course, by enabling acts of the state legislature.

Thus, two patterns of federal control can be distinguished among the cooperative programs now in action. One shows the federal government working through agencies of the state. The classic example is that of the county agent, whose normal alma mater, the state land-grant college, supervises his work through its extension division and is allowed by the terms of its agreement with the federal extension service to exercise



almost sovereign rights within the range of its functions in its state. The Social Security Board follows a similarly gracious policy by instructing its merit system investigators to go no farther than the state capitol; also the Public Roads Administration, which adheres rigidly to its principle of working exclusively through the state commissioner of highways.

The other pattern is that of the emergency programs which have gone directly to local units; so, too, the Bureau of Prisons in its inspection of the county jail—an inspection, incidentally, which is duplicated by the state division of public institutions.

### "GOVERNMENT LOCALLY"

The system of local government just described—drawn to include even the cooperative action control programs of state and federal governments—is only part of the structure of government in the community. There remains a large sector which for want of a better term can be called "government locally."

The term is not a familiar one, but it has the advantage of describing as simply as possible an increasingly prevalent method of administering government at the local level: i.e., for state and federal governments to take direct action in the community without resort to the machinery of local government.

The method is not a new one. Federal action in the local area dates back through the years of territorial government. One of the earliest on-the-spot projects was a series of land and geological surveys in the 1840s. The surveys were conducted by army engineers who continued to be active in the community after it was settled, constructing military roads and keeping watch over the Minnesota River during its forty years of navigability. From 1852 on, federal inspectors regularly checked the steamboats which plied the Minnesota River. Post offices were next to appear, many of them—for example, Mankato's, which was established in 1853—antedating the political organization of the settlement in which they were located.

By the time Lincoln led the Republicans into office in 1861, there were enough federal appointments to be made in the county to bring on a wild scramble for patronage. On the list were eleven postmasterships, the positions of receiver and registrar at the local United States land office, and at least five openings on the staff of the Winnebago Reservation (agent, physician, teacher, trader, and farmer).

In 1861, the federal District Court held its first session in Mankato, attended by the United States marshal. The latter was familiar to the community in his regular capacity, but he had also become director of the federal census within the area. The arrival of still another federal agent during the sixties was rather quaintly recorded by a historian of that period: "The great war debt was heavy on the people and the revenue collector was abroad in the land. Every deed, note, mortgage, contract, and even match box and broom and every household utensil and store commodity must bear the government stamp. The lawyers, doctors, and dentists have to procure licenses."<sup>7</sup>

In the case of the state, the distinction between "local government" and "government locally" was not discernible at first. One reason was that the state, unlike the federal government, began with a system of local government at its disposal, and could count on local units—especially the county—to accomplish its purposes within the community. A further reason was that legislative control was flexible enough so that local institutions during their formative years could be adapted to meet the needs of government at the local level as they emerged.

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<sup>7</sup>Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 163.



It is not surprising, therefore, to find that during the first quarter-century of Minnesota's history as a state, there were only scattered instances of governmental activity within the community which did not come under the aegis of local government. Two companies of militia had been organized in the county as early as 1869, equipped by the state armorer and commanded, ultimately, by the state adjutant general; as far as administration was concerned, they were in no way responsible to local units of government. The same held true of the teachers college which the state established in Mankato nine years later.

During the decade of the seventies, four more state agencies began to participate directly in the life of the community: the railroad department (1871), the board of health and vital statistics (1872), the department of insurance (1872), and the office of the public examiner (1878). The first was made responsible for rate and traffic regulation, while the last two were assigned to investigate the operations of insurance companies and the financial condition of local banks and savings institutions.

The board of health—and the board of correction and charities (1883) as well—have never made a clear break with the tradition of working through local units of government. Both agencies were originally superimposed upon the health and welfare organization of local government, and continued to rely upon local units to carry out, under their supervision, the greater share of the work actually accomplished within the community. Progressively, however, as advances were made in their resources and techniques, both boards widened the scope of their own activity. The board of health began with advisory authority over local units; in 1893, it was conducting laboratory analyses and enforcing regulations having to do with both human and animal health; and by 1912, it had established a branch laboratory in Mankato to supplement the local services of its sanitary engineers and epidemiologists. The board of corrections began by assuming control over the existing penal and welfare institutions of the state, and by establishing a supervisory relationship over local administration. Within ten years, its agents were in Blue Earth County conducting case investigations and follow-up studies, as well as supervising persons on parole or probation.

These few instances of direct state administration were but a taste of what was to come. Starting in the eighties, state government entered a period of rapid growth, its administrative facilities increasing at a rate which reflected a ready recognition by the legislature that many of the newer functions demanded a scale and uniformity of action which precluded the use of local government.

Between 1885 and 1900, statewide jurisdiction had been granted to six occupational examining and licensing boards. During that same interval, inspectors came into the community from at least four different agencies: the dairy and food commission (1885), the steam boilers inspection unit (1885), the bureau of labor statistics (1887), and the oil inspection department (1892). The first game warden arrived early in the nineties, and in 1894, a state entomologist was trying desperately but in vain to stem an onrushing tide of chinch bugs in the county.

From 1900 until the advent of the New Deal, state government locally continued to expand at a steady rate. Three examining boards were added before 1910; another six by 1920; and four more during the following decade. The bureau of labor, industries, and commerce increased its force of factory inspectors in 1907; and in 1921, the highway commission entered the community to construct and maintain a system of state roads. In 1923, the department of rural credit started its ten-year program of relieving banks and farmers of their mortgage holdings. Four years later, the state entered directly into the field of law enforcement by establishing a bureau of criminal apprehension, with the creation of the highway patrol as a companion-piece in 1929. Meanwhile, an apiary inspector had been added in 1907; an athletic commission in 1915; an automobile board in 1913; a securities commission in 1917; and a liquor control commissioner in 1927.

All this time, the federal government was steadily contributing its share to government locally. On the one hand, its financial assistance was making possible the expansion of state activities in the fields of highways, health, and military affairs. On the other, it was establishing local administrative outposts of its own. Bank examiners were active in the community both before and after the adoption of the Federal Reserve System. Pure food and drug inspectors began to appear sporadically after 1907; and internal revenue agents set up a local office in Mankato following the enactment of income tax legislation in 1913. The 1916 rapprochement between the National Guard and the United States Army brought frequent visits from army liaison officers and deposited two instructional officers in the community. Agricultural credit agencies began their local operations in 1918, 1921, and 1923: the Federal Land Bank through the Madelia National Farm Loan Association; the Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Section directly; and the Intermediate Credit Bank through the Mankato Production Credit Association. Federal law enforcement officers had appeared once or twice in the community after the creation of the Secret Service in 1865, but it was not until 1930 and the later days of Dillinger and of loyalty investigations that FBI men became as familiar as the time-honored United States marshal.

The period of the thirties constituted a new era in the development of both structure and methods of community government. On the one hand, as described earlier, local government was reinforced by the sudden inflow of grants-in-aid and by cooperative administrative arrangements made with state and federal agencies. On the other hand, a great part of the governmental energy unleashed by the emergency and by the New Deal was channeled directly into the community, with the result that government locally grew in dramatic fashion.

The most spectacular developments were those instituted by the federal government in dealing with the problems of agriculture, welfare, public works, employment, and relief. First, there was the miracle of administrative fertility—in agriculture, AAA, FSA, REA, PCA, RACC, FCIC, and CCC; in relief and employment, CWA, WPA, NYA, CCC, and USES; and in public works, PWA.<sup>8</sup>

Second, there were the amazing sums of money expended locally. For example, CWA in January 1934, was spending at the rate of \$65,014.55 a month to keep 814 residents at work on local projects. AAA's contribution to the farming community during 1934 amounted to \$227,095.45.<sup>9</sup>

Third, there was the great flexibility in administrative adjustments and experimentation. Agencies such as CWA, WPA, and PWA acted nominally through state and local units; but there was a directness about their participation in local affairs that gave them a totally independent standing. The agricultural agencies, also, left no doubt as to their independence of either state or local government, or of their intention to become recognized as permanent fixtures in the community's government.

REA found local anchorage in the cooperative form of organization—a device earlier used by the Federal Land Bank and again by the Intermediate Credit Bank in establishing local credit outlets. A quite different tack was followed by the Farm Security

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<sup>8</sup>Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Farm Security Administration (earlier the Resettlement Administration), Rural Electrification Administration, Production Credit Association, Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, and Commodity Credit Corporation; Civil Works Administration, Works Progress Administration, National Youth Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, and United States Employment Service; Public Works Administration.

<sup>9</sup>Records of the Blue Earth County AAA committee and monthly reports of the Emergency Relief Administration (Minnesota).



Administration which retained direct administrative control over its local supervisor. This was the form of organization earlier adopted by the Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Section. In the case of both agencies, as a gesture toward localization, the district supervisor was furnished with an advisory loan committee made up of resident farmers.

In the attempts of AAA at "local democracy" it began to appear that the federal government was on the way to establishing its own system of local government to match that of the state. Three-man "community" committees were elected annually in each of the twenty-three townships by farmers who were participating in AAA. At these meetings, ballots were cast for the selection of three county committeemen who were to be responsible for administering the county program. To complete the notion of a "two-way process," participating farmers were given the opportunity to vote on the details of the program for the coming year; and county committeemen were regularly canvassed by the state AAA committee for their opinions and suggestions.

In the meantime, federal government locally was expanding along other lines. To mention a few examples, there were the program of Old Age Insurance and the periodic checks made of local compliance with minimum wage, welfare, and civil aeronautics regulations.

The state, interestingly enough, made only a minimum of structural changes in its government during this period. A series of adjustments were made to accommodate the grant-in-aid programs of the federal government; but the only major reorganization involved the state's welfare system which in 1933 was completely inadequate to handle the emergency relief projects suddenly thrust upon it. Highway aids, however, and the successive grants for health, welfare, and educational work were readily absorbed by the state's administrative departments.

As a consequence, few changes were to be noted in the pattern of state government locally. Food inspection, highway construction and maintenance, investigation of health and industrial conditions, along with the other field activities of the state, continued much as before, except where increased federal aid enabled the several agencies to expand.

In the single case where the state broke new ground in its methods of local administration, it was led to do so by the assurance of federal support. This was the establishment of a district health unit in Mankato, staffed with a physician-director, a supervisor of public health nurses, a sanitary engineer, and a clerk. Its assignment was to promote public health work among local units, to serve them in an advisory capacity, and to coordinate the local activities of the state department of health.

By 1945, government locally had grown to rather startling dimensions; the share of the total program of government which it embraced at the local level, though impossible to determine as an exact percentage, was obviously a significant one.

In that year there were ninety-eight agencies of the state active in the community's government but operating more or less independently of local units. Eighteen of these maintained offices within the community; sixteen served the county from administrative districts which did not have local field offices; and the remainder worked directly out of central offices in either St. Paul or Minneapolis.

Among the first two groups, there was considerable variation in the size of the administrative areas to which they were assigned. In general, there was a tendency to follow county lines, the number of counties with which Blue Earth was included varying from one to twenty-six. The most frequently used area was one which comprised thirteen counties; however, in the six cases in which that number was used, the counties included were never the same.

By far the largest class of state agents working directly within the community was that of inspectors and law enforcement officers, who accounted for over two thirds the number of those listed. No more than twenty could be classified as service agencies (e.g., health, welfare, highways, parks).

The roster of federal agencies contained in the appendix should not be taken as complete, except in the case of the thirty-three agencies listed as resident. It will be noted that of these, thirteen are post offices and seven are wartime agencies.

There is as much variation among federal as among state agencies in the size of administrative areas. On the other hand, many more federal agencies were engaged in activity of a service nature—although it should be remembered that only a sample number of the inspectional, regulatory, and compliance personnel of the federal government have been included on the list.

### THE IMPACT OF WAR

The adjustments and innovations which wars have successively introduced into the structure of government at the grass roots have given rise to a number of developments, of which three are especially significant. These are the emergence of a workable selective service system, the further integration of state and national armed forces, and the progressively broader mobilization of the community's resources.

The original moves were made during the Civil War. Blue Earth County, it will be remembered, was caught between two wars; the more she contributed to the armies, the more she was in danger of attack from the irritable Sioux. In August 1861, while United States Army troops<sup>10</sup> were moving out of the frontier outposts, Lincoln commanded by draft local companies of state militia, and thus left the community without an organized defense. Resort was had almost immediately to conscription. The legislature ordered that every able-bodied male between the ages of eighteen and forty-five should be listed in companies for the defense of the frontier; and in January 1862—anticipating by two months the decision of Congress to prescribe a national draft—the county proceeded to implement the new law by dividing its area into twelve military districts, corresponding to the towns then organized.

The action came none too soon. The Sioux were on the warpath by the middle of August. When that happened, companies of Rangers and Home Guards were organized on the spot, commandants elected, and commissioned officers created outright. The forces which finally defeated Little Crow consisted of a conglomeration of local Rangers, state militiamen, and United States Army regulars.

It was at this time the opinion of the state adjutant general that the existing procedures for enlisting manpower left much to be desired. In the first place, local companies of militia had just begun to organize when the war broke out, and there were consequently few that responded to Lincoln's call. Second, there was the problem of providing incentives for volunteers. It had taken little urging to turn the community into a band of Indian fighters under the provisions of the state draft; but it took \$53,500 paid in bounties<sup>11</sup> by towns and villages to fulfill the quotas assigned under the program of national conscription.

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<sup>10</sup>Many of the troops were southerners who later joined the Confederate armies. On their way through Mankato, they stirred up some commotion by expressing their approval of the firing on Fort Sumter.

<sup>11</sup>Private groups and individual draftees looking for substitutes added another \$600 to this sum (State Adjutant General's Report for 1866).



Following the Civil War and for the next fifty years, steady progress was made in developing the militia locally and also in standardizing its organization throughout the county. There were only six years, curiously enough those from 1895 to 1901, when local interest was not high enough to maintain a local unit;<sup>12</sup> and the showing made by Company F at the 1887 National Guard military tournament in Chicago is one of the memories still cherished by the community. The year 1916 marks the point in the history of the Guard when federal interest became regularized. In that year, preparatory to calling up the Guard for duty on the Mexican border, Congress passed an act providing that the Guard be almost entirely equipped and maintained by the federal government.

Had the adjutant general of 1865 lived to see World War I, he would have found his criticisms of military administration well answered. The recruitment of manpower was carried on crisply and without recourse to financial incentives. Company H of the National Guard was brought back from Texas and within a few months re-mustered into federal service. The county's draft board began work in the late spring of 1917, and processed 6676 men before the close of the war—of whom 786 were actually drafted.

Meanwhile, recruitment for manpower on the home front was in full swing. Company H of the National Guard was replaced by Company C, 6th Battalion, Minnesota Home Guard, for purposes of civilian defense and emergency law enforcement. The latter was formed entirely of volunteers, and served directly under the Minnesota commission of public safety. It was mobilized for duty on at least three different occasions: a street railway strike in St. Paul, a northern Minnesota forest fire, and the Tyler, Minnesota cyclone.

In effect, the commission of public safety was Minnesota's World War I anticipation of the Office of Civilian Defense and related organizations created by the federal government twenty-four years later. At the same time it illustrates the difference in the techniques used to mobilize the community during the two world wars. The commission was given a check of \$1 million to use as it wished, and was authorized to do "all acts and things not inconsistent with the constitution or laws of the State of Minnesota or of the United States which are necessary or proper for the public safety and for the protection of life and public property, or private property of a character as in the judgment of the Commission required protection." Under the leadership of the commission, steps were taken to mobilize every man, woman, and child as a part of Minnesota's war activity program. In Blue Earth, as in each of the counties, a director was appointed to coordinate all the various volunteer groups which associated themselves with the commission—among them the Home Guard, a women's auxiliary, and a Motor Corps Reserve.

The pattern of military recruitment and home defense in World War II differed in several respects. One was in timing—the National Guard (for which Mankato in the interwar years had become regional headquarters and a permanent location for two regular army instruction officers) was called up in the winter of 1940-41, nearly a year before war was declared. By that time, the county's draft boards (now two instead of one) were already in operation. No effort was made to resurrect the Minnesota public safety commission, which had died a natural death in 1920. Instead, the volunteer State Guard units were formed to replace the National Guard and, along with the Civil Air Patrol, were made to serve directly under the state adjutant general. On the federal side, the Office of Civilian Defense used its shoestring of authority and its hastily appointed state council to organize and equip a volunteer force of air raid and fire wardens in the city of Mankato.

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<sup>12</sup>A company was organized in 1898 by forty-five volunteers—the county's only contribution to the Spanish-American War.

Concurrently with this three-war trend toward a systematized and broader recruitment of manpower for military and defense purposes, there has been a succession of increases in the number of central government controls and pressures exerted upon the community. The burden of the Civil War was primarily one of taxation; Indian troubles aside, there was remarkably little disturbance in the development of the community and its resources. Proof of this statement lies in the fact that the county's population doubled during the war years; its school districts, buildings, and enrollment all tripled; and well over 100,000 acres were brought into production for the first time.

The controls adopted during World War I appear in retrospect as experimental beginnings for those of the second. Despite the rather imposing charge given the Minnesota public safety commission, the state did not enter extensively into local affairs; and of the numerous controls to which Congress had resorted by war's end, only a few were implemented directly within Blue Earth. Coal, fuel, profits, labor, and transportation orders applied there as elsewhere; but the community was not important enough or large enough to attract district headquarters or regularized field operations. On the other hand, considerable emphasis was placed on the promotional side of the war effort: war bond drives by Treasury representatives<sup>13</sup>, bandage-rolling and sweater-knitting by Red Cross volunteers, and, not least, Mr. Hoover's War Food Program. The last was operated with all due respect to the protocol of American intergovernmental relations. The title and duties of state food administrator were bestowed on the state's director of extension; in the county the agricultural agent became an emergency food administrator in charge of encouraging a higher level production of food-stuffs.

By the time World War II was under way, the accumulated wisdom of the past and the obvious need for all-out production dictated the reinstatement of World War I controls and made mandatory a number of activities earlier conducted on a volunteer basis. Mankato's United States Employment Service worked hand in glove with Selective Service; the ration board with its corps of more than two hundred non-paid workers moved quickly into action; the Office of Defense Transportation descended with a heavy hand; the Defense Plant Corporation set up a local office and launched activity into the production of hemp; AAA took over the allocation of farm machinery and supplies, and shared with the Emergency Crop and Feed Agency the granting of Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation loans. "Posses" of war bond solicitors—one to each city block—campaigned through a citizenry that had already subscribed under compulsory payroll deduction plans.

In noting the impact of World War II on government within Blue Earth County, one cannot miss the fact that local units have played a relatively small part. One of their few distinct contributions has been the defense job training provided by the Mankato school district, but even that was supported entirely by federal funds, equipped by federally purchased machinery, and supervised by the district's coordinator who was employed under the George-Deen Act. The county's war effort consisted in extending the emergency health and welfare benefits provided by the federal government, and in underwriting the costs of rent, telephone, light, heat, and attendants'

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<sup>13</sup>Treasury representatives met with a cold reception from the immigrant German population in the area. Uniformly, bonds were bought to the amount of \$25 or \$50, and no higher; bond rallies held in German communities were noticeably uninspired. Pro-German sentiment grew strong in individual cases—a president of a neighboring German Lutheran college refused to be muzzled and had to be saved from internment by the governor. The more Americanized element responded by applying yellow paint to the homes, churches, and business establishments of German residents.



salaries incurred by the war rationing board. Otherwise, local units sat out the war on the sidelines, shrinking their activities where forced to do so because of the shortage of men and materials expanding their services where financially encouraged by state or federal governments, moving sporadically to make life as convenient as possible for those on the fighting front, and all the while strengthening their fiscal position. All in all, local units looked remarkably like the other civic and commercial organizations in the community for whom war meant a necessary departure from their regular course of activity.

It was the federal government and the spontaneous action of the community that carried the day on the home front. Insofar as administrative channels had been cut into the landscape of local government, federal authorities worked through local units—as in the cases of the welfare board's dispensation of maternity benefits to the wives of servicemen, the vocational education program of the Mankato school district, and the county agent's allocation of Jamaican, Mexican, and war prisoner labor among local farmers. But these were isolated cases. To satisfy its need for immediate and flexible action, the federal government turned more regularly to existing administrative units such as AAA and USES or to specially created establishments such as OPA. This was a far cry from the administrative procedures of the Civil War, when local units were charged with almost the entire conduct of the war effort at the community level. Still, the current leadership of the federal government has been the fulfillment of a promise made during World War I and a natural follow-through from the pattern made during the thirties.

Much of what the federal government accomplished should be credited to the citizen body of Blue Earth County. Serving mostly without pay, they staffed the draft boards, the war rationing board and its seven-member panels, the AAA and Civilian Defense units; two hundred Victory Aides—volunteer women—spelled each other at the ration board's office and took care of the grueling chore work involved in processing applications, mailing coupons, etc.; and an equal number of block leaders turned out faithfully at each War Bond Drive to boost the sale of bonds.

This was but part of the citizen effort. USO volunteers met every train routed through Mankato; the Salvation Army doled out candy and cigarettes to each departing draftee. The Community Chest, service clubs, and Red Cross stood ready to counsel, and where necessary to aid, the families of servicemen. The Veterans' Council—a joint organization of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars—took the initiative in counseling GI's and in advising them with respect to their rights under state and federal legislation. Scrap drives were conducted vigorously by the Scouts, 4-H, and YMCA; and country youths responded readily to the call for milkweed pods to be used in the making of kapok life rafts. Schools, business establishments, and churches all dedicated time and money to the war program. The Chamber of Commerce stepped in to negotiate with the War Production Board and the various housing agencies.

In concluding, a significant point to note is that war programs have usually gone as quickly as they have come. The only permanent effects—apart from the impact on citizen thinking, which is too subtle to record—have been continued high tax rates (especially on incomes), steady building of the military, and expanded services for veterans.

#### QUASI-GOVERNMENTAL AND RELATED PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

One of the difficult parts of an attempt to trace the structure of government in the community is the task of establishing its outer limits. There is no clear distinction between what is governmental and what is not; the lines of public action often trail out and end in the activity of quasi-governmental and private organizations.

The case of the Farm Bureau is a familiar one; but the bureau is not the only citizen group to have been grafted onto the structure of government, nor is it the first. Recognizing the contribution which various groups were making to the public interest,<sup>14</sup> the legislature extended its aid in quick succession to the State Historical Society (1864), the State Agricultural Society (1867),<sup>15</sup> the State Forestry Association (1878), the State Dairymen's Association (1882), the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (1899),<sup>16</sup> and the Minnesota Butter and Cheese Makers Association (1894). Using these organizations as media, the state was able to promote technical progress in each of the various fields, and to stage educational exhibits which ranged from local garden shows to state fair extravaganzas.

Citizens of the county have been active in each of these associations and have organized at least four local groups which correspond to the larger state societies. They include the Blue Earth County Historical Society, the Blue Earth County Poultry Association, the Blue Earth County Agricultural Society, and the Mankato Fair Association. All four are being subsidized by the county, the last three by both county and state.

It was not until shortly before the turn of the century that state administrators turned to group action as a technique for expediting their own programs. The first instance of its use came with the establishment of Farmers Institutes in 1887, part of an attempt to disseminate research findings of the new experiment station among farmers of the state. Leadership for the project came, naturally, from the station; and the finances—up to \$20,000 annually—from the state treasury. The idea was immediately translated into action in Blue Earth County, two Institutes being held during 1890, and others more or less regularly until the arrival of the county agent in 1918.

The famed union between the county agent and the Farm Bureau which followed began innocently enough as an attempt by the state legislature to provide a cordial reception for the county agent upon his arrival in the community, and to give him a continuing guarantee of local support. It was not anticipated that the Farm Bureau organization—which in Blue Earth County as in the other counties of the state was to control the appointment of the agent and largely govern the course of his day-to-day operations—would become an integral part of a national pressure group.<sup>17</sup>

The legislature left room for a similar development when it authorized the county to employ a staff of public health nurses. According to the terms of the enabling act, the nurses were to function under the supervision of a county nursing committee comprised of the county health officer, the county superintendent of schools, one of the commissioners, and two laymen appointed by the board. Meanwhile, however, interested

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<sup>14</sup>Variously interpreted, of course. Three years after the Dairymen's Association had been legally recognized, the legislature created the state dairy and food commission to meet a situation which saw "oleomargarine . . . rapidly displacing the pure butter of the farm and dairy in all the cheaper hotels and restaurants, thereby compelling the farmer and dairyman to place his pure product in competition with the renderings of the packing houses" (Minnesota Legislative Manual, 1891, p. 391).

<sup>15</sup>Re-created as a public corporation in 1905.

<sup>16</sup>Designated by statute in 1903 as a state bureau of child and animal protection. Its governing board was set up to include the governor, attorney general, and commissioner of education; and its agents were commissioned to act, within the organization's purpose, as local law enforcement officers.

<sup>17</sup>The local operation of the Farm Bureau, as well as that of the Blue Earth County Public Health Association, will be considered at length in later chapters.



citizens were organizing the Blue Earth County Health Association (1923) to facilitate and support the work of the nurses in the community. Home leaders and auxiliary committees were set up in each of the five commissioner districts, and regular meetings were arranged to work out a schedule of activity for both the association members and the county nurses. Then came the final touch: the association shaped its board of directors so that, position for position, it met the legal specifications for a county nursing committee. The county board cooperated, as it has ever since, by arranging its appointments so that the membership of the two executive bodies would coincide.

The Farm Bureau and the Public Health Association, together with a third quasi-public organization, the American Red Cross, present a contrasting picture in their arrangements for national affiliation. The Public Health Association refused from the start to become involved with any larger organization—a policy which grew out of the belief of its founder (a very able and respected woman physician) that funds and effort would be better directed if local authority and responsibility were left untouched. This urge for independence has been so strong that even financial inducements have not been enough to overcome it. All offers of aid to support the county's health unit have been ignored, and the association continues to obtain funds by selling its own brand of Christmas seals.

On the other hand, local units of both the Farm Bureau and the Red Cross remain organically a part of their respective national organizations. To date, there have been few signs of resentment against the national Farm Bureau for the liberty with which it purports to represent the sentiment of its member groups. This tolerance is understandable enough, since the platform of the bureau fits in so well with the outlook of a large segment of the county's farmers, and since those who disagree are not likely to be members.

Peace does not always reign between the local chapter of the Red Cross and its parent organization. The most recent case of friction developed in 1946, when, following a tornado disaster, no fewer than eleven staff members (ranging from medical service personnel to accountants and bookkeepers) moved in from regional offices to supervise local relief operations. Within two days the Blue Earth County chairman was brandishing his resignation, charging that the national representatives were more publicity-minded than helpful and that they were guilty of trespass upon the chapter's local domain.

The groups mentioned thus far are all citizen organizations which enjoy a semi-governmental status and/or periodic dividends from the public treasury. There remain, of course, a large number of nonsubsidized private agencies which dedicate themselves to the public interest. Strictly speaking, perhaps, they do not belong in this discussion of the structure of government; but it is one of the propositions on which this study is based that the process of government should not be considered apart from other forms of community action. Not only do these organizations, as in the field of health and relief, work closely with corresponding agencies of government; more significantly, it can be shown that governmental services have a way of evolving from group action first taken on a voluntary basis, and that private organizations continue to shoulder public burdens which might otherwise devolve upon government.

For example, the Mankato Automobile Club may be nothing more than a society of Sunday tourists today, but forty years ago its founders gave birth to the good-roads movement in Minnesota. With \$200 given them by the Chamber of Commerce, they traveled through the surrounding towns and tried to demonstrate to skeptical farmers the improvements that would result from working roads with the old split-log drag. When their \$200 ran out, they used their own money to purchase road drags for distribution among the township residents—one enthusiast went so far as to donate 1 per cent of the revenue from his clothing store sales. The next step was to organize graveling

bees, which became regular farm community events after 1912 and lasted until road building was centralized under county, state, and federal governments.

Charitable and educational groups are the most conspicuous of contemporary organizations devoted to the community's interests. Each year, the Community Chest spends as much on emergency relief as the county does for public health. The only general hospitals in the community are those owned and operated by the two local hospital associations—the one Lutheran, the other Catholic. The county's school health program depends almost entirely upon the cooperation of the Parent-Teachers Association and the Blue Earth County Medical Association.

Additional relief and welfare work is carried on by each of the four major service clubs. Members of the Kiwanis, for example, arrange annual camp weeks for children of low-income families, and respond to the occasional requests forwarded to them by other community relief agencies. Also to be mentioned in this connection are the YMCA, the YWCA, and the Salvation Army.

The Chamber of Commerce, the Junior Chamber, the Retail Division, the Mankato Builders' Exchange, and the Mankato Manufacturers and Wholesalers Association constitute an economic legislature for the city of Mankato. Here are staged the preliminary, and in many cases the decisive, debates on such issues as whether the commercial zone of the city is to extend more than a block and a half up from Front Street, whether and at what expense the state's postwar planning council should be invited to conduct a local economic survey, whether certain business practices are to be condoned, and whether the administration of government in the locality is proceeding satisfactorily. It is here, too, that the businessmen of the community who ordinarily voice their criticisms of government, yet shun public office, are encouraged to become articulate and oftentimes constructive in their discussion of civic affairs.

Similarly, the professional groups (lawyers, doctors, teachers), clubs, societies, church associations, and even the nineteenth hole of the Mankato Golf Club become special legislatures, setting—or at least strongly influencing—governmental policy in their own fields of interest. No systematic study of this informal machinery of government in Blue Earth County has been made; but later chapters are shot through with examples of how it works.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The foregoing inventory of government within the community confirms what lies uneasily but ill-defined within the mind of the average Blue Earth County taxpayer: government at the grass roots is a ponderous mechanism.

A townsman looking upward at the structure of government sees first the school district to which he belongs, then the town (organized township), next the county, above that the state, and lastly the federal government—each looming successively larger. For a villager or city-dweller, the picture is the same: five layers of governmental authority, five sources of taxation. What neither is likely to see, but which both in a frustrating way are sure to sense, is the tremendously complicated system of relationships which holds the mechanism together.

The several tiers and numerous units of local government are a legacy from the pioneer years of the community. With few exceptions they have withstood the passing of a century without fundamental change. There has been no rationalization of the sort proposed by William Anderson.<sup>18</sup> There have been only the scattered evidences of a

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<sup>18</sup>William Anderson, The Units of Government in the United States, first edition (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1934), pp. 28-37.



process of adjustment that waits on technical progress, serious emergency, or promise of financial gain. The town remains structurally and functionally what it was in the early years of its establishment. Villages continue to elect their original quota of officers, but have forged ahead on occasion to secure for themselves such benefits as running water and the profits from municipal sale of liquor. Schools with few exceptions remain small and antiquated, administrative personnel unqualified, and dollar-costs the measuring stick of an adequate education. Only the county, the city of Mankato, and a dozen or so school districts give marked signs of growth and adjustment. Yet what advances the county has made have been chiefly at the instigation of state and federal governments; and, like the city of Mankato, its organization has been allowed to lag far behind the development of its services.

In contrast, the history first of state and more recently and dramatically of federal government in Blue Earth County is one of growth and development. The state began by depending upon local government to accomplish its purposes within the community, but soon resorted to the control and supervision of local units. Shortly, too, the state found itself called upon to act directly within the county; as a result, there were few legislative sessions between the Civil War and World War II which did not add to the range of state government locally.

The story of federal activity in the county differs only with respect to technique and timing. The federal government has usually employed persuasion rather than coercion, waiting until the twentieth century and especially the recent periods of national emergency before regularizing and expanding its influence within the community.

The resulting picture of government at the grass roots does not bear much resemblance to the stereotyped conception of the American system, with state and federal governments rising pyramid-like in distinctly separated levels from the broad base of local government. Instead, all three levels have been telescoped upon the community and have proceeded to operate with no clear delineation of interests, no delicately regulated division of labor. The community has been turned into a meeting ground for the programs and agencies of federal, state, and local governments; and as this has happened, it has become progressively more difficult as well as less meaningful to discern distinctions among levels.

Any conclusion that is to be drawn regarding the structure and development of government within Blue Earth County must be both critical and apologetic. In terms of efficiency alone, it is a rather sad commentary on the American system that 155 units of local government and again that number of state and federal agencies should operate in one community without unified plan or singleness of purpose. And on the evidence, there is as good reason to become discouraged with the stodgy character of local government as with the lumbering movement of a multilevel system.

On the other hand, if a person respects the premise upon which American inter-governmental relations have been based—namely that government at each level is to operate with a certain degree of independence—and appreciates the inevitability of friction within a system so premised, he may well be encouraged by the picture this chapter presents. He will have understood that local government has changed slowly because the community has changed slowly, but will have seen that local units continue to play a vital role in the governmental life of the community. He will have seen that the resources of state and federal government have been called increasingly into play, and that a fair start has been made toward establishing American government on a co-operative base. He will have become aware that if the appearance of state and federal agencies in the community has brought with it instances of conflict or of duplication, it has also brought needed services that were beyond the competence or perspective of local government.

There is no doubt that reform is necessary, first to reduce the waste to which uncoordinated action inevitably leads; second, to add flexibility to the multilevel structure of government; and third, to equip local units to serve more effectively in the multiple role they must play as instruments of local self-government and as administrative agencies of nation and state.

But reform in turn must be based on a sympathetic view of the developmental process which has made government at the local level what it is, and on an intimate knowledge of the *modus vivendi* its various parts have arrived at.



## CHAPTER 4

# A Functional View of Government and Intergovernmental Relations

The loose-jointed system of government in motion presents a rather awesome spectacle, in many ways reminiscent of a Rube Goldberg masterpiece. It creaks and strains, is frequently out of gear, and occasionally breaks down, but in the process manages somehow to get things done.

There are obvious problems involved in any attempt to describe the system in operation, chief of which is to strike a balance between detail and perspective. As a compromise, this chapter surveys the patterns of government in each of ten major fields and then the following three chapters examine in a microscopic way the manner in which different governments operate and interrelate in three selected fields: agriculture, health, and highways.

There is good reason for choosing these fields. The field of agriculture is the area of most concern to the Blue Earth community, and also the one in which governmental experimentation both administratively and policy-wise has been carried farthest. The field of health gives a picture of the community at its most conservative and of government in its elementary and atomized form. The field of highways gives clear evidence of the centralizing process in American government, tempered, however, by the need for continuous interest by each level of government and accomplished only through the orderly development of a grant-in-aid system.

### GENERAL PATTERNS OF GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITY AND INTERRELATIONSHIPS

In agriculture, the dramatic developments have been in federal programs of credit, extension and research, production control, and price stabilization. These programs, however, tend to divert attention from the continuous work being done by other federal agencies and by state and local organizations in research, extension activities, grading of produce, market regulations, animal and plant development, pest and disease control, and conservation.

Three trends may be noted. First, except for extension work (county), drainage (county), vocational education (Mankato school district), weed inspection (county, towns, cities, villages), and certain related services (e.g., roads by county and towns), local units have played a small part in the government of agriculture. The state and increasingly the national government have assumed the major responsibilities. Second, in equipping itself for its share of the work within the community, the national government has developed machinery and techniques of local administration which constitute a discernible trend toward a unitary rather than a federal system of government. Third, as the government of agriculture has grown to include state and federal action, the community has been forced to recast its notions of self-sufficiency and political autonomy. It has been treated as a part of a larger community, has found itself outvoted and little-considered in the shaping of programs to which it has become subject, and has been forced to adapt itself to the new type of administrative politics.

Commerce, industry, and the professions in Blue Earth County see mostly the regulatory and enforcement side of government. Again, local units have been relegated to a minor role; they retain only such controls as the licensing of retail establishments (towns, villages, cities), the inspection of eating places (villages and cities), ownership and operation of liquor stores and public utilities (villages and cities), and zoning (cities). Enforcement of standards and of fair trade practices, examination and licensing in the various professions and occupations, rate regulation, control of money and banking, postal service, and far-ranging inspectional work have all been assumed directly by the state and federal governments.

Conservation and recreation have usually been considered as paired functions, chiefly as a result of the game, fish, and forest-park work of the state department of conservation. However, the recent programs of the federal government tend to treat the two problems separately: soil conservation through the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps, recreational development through the National Youth Administration and the various public works agencies. Meanwhile, local units carry on in a more traditional vein. Cities and villages maintain parks and playgrounds in varied numbers and conditions of repair, with Mankato the proud owner of a 600-acre combined park and zoo. The county continues to average over \$100,000 per year in maintenance expenditures on its drainage ditches. School districts all provide playgrounds, and the two larger ones playground directors. Towns do little or nothing.

Educational administration differs at each school level. Through the secondary level, local units are in complete charge, though profiting from state (and scattered federal) grants and conforming as far as necessary to state requirements. Higher education is provided directly by the state in the form of a local state teachers college and the state university. Vocational education and on-the-job training are conducted by employees of the Mankato school district under state supervision using national funds.

Health, more than any other field, is the concern of all levels and units of government, and the amount and quality of service are directly proportional to the size and financial resources of the unit involved. The governing bodies of towns, villages, and cities constitute boards of health for their own jurisdictions and are supposed, at least, to appoint health officers. The county and in some cases the schools employ public health nurses. At the state level, there is a well-developed department of health which operates under a state board vested with extensive powers of administrative control over local health authorities. The state department is amply provided with federal funds, and spends much of its time assisting local units and supplementing their activity within the community.

Highway construction is a field of as nearly universal concern as health, and certainly more expensive.<sup>1</sup> The role of the federal government is confined to the distribution and supervision of grants; its contact with the community occurs almost exclusively through the state department of highways. The state department, in turn, divides its funds and efforts between aiding the county in the construction and maintenance of certain types of roads and building and maintaining its own system of highways. The county gives a small amount of aid to the towns, and spends most of its highway revenue on construction and maintenance. Towns, villages, and cities are free to provide thoroughfares as they wish, but with almost no aid from state or federal governments.

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<sup>1</sup>At 1945 rates, it cost the county as much to construct each mile of paved road as it did to operate the health department for ten years.

Labor and employment security are with few exceptions the concern solely of state and national governments. Local units have nothing to do with employment service, workmen's compensation, wage legislation, the collective bargaining process, or the regulation of plant conditions. Their role is incidental to such activities as public works, provision of direct relief, and distribution of grants under the Social Security system.

Law enforcement and public safety have been a concern of all three levels since the founding of the Blue Earth community. The activity of local government in this field has been more or less constant over the years, except for the progress made in municipal fire and police service, and for the slowly developing trend away from law enforcement by town and village officials. Local officers still include the county sheriff, city policemen and firemen, village policemen and firemen, and one or two town constables; on the judicial side, the officers of the municipal court and a handful of village and town justices of the peace. Meanwhile, state and federal activity has been expanding both in kinds and in amount. Historically, the development has been from military action and the establishment of state and federal judiciary systems, to the rapid growth, within recent years, of administrative agencies. The latter include the FBI, the state highway police, and the state bureau of criminal apprehension, not to mention the wide assortment of other agencies, like the postal inspectorate, which operate at the periphery of law enforcement.

Organization for military and home defense purposes has been described in an earlier section. Until recently, local government in Blue Earth County stood apart from such activity except for its role in stimulating recruitment during the Civil War. At the state level, the adjutant general served as a claims agent for the federal government, and the legislature dispensed postwar bonuses. It was the federal government with its bonus legislation and its several veterans' agencies (combined in 1930 into the Veterans Administration) which largely pre-empted the field.

By 1945, however, definite attempts were being made to bring each level into play, and to effect some coordination of their efforts. The Veterans Administration used as its local agency the veterans' service center which had been set up by the combined veterans organizations and was later transferred to and financed by the county. Meanwhile, the state was striving earnestly to put its own department of veterans affairs to better use—shortsighted legislation had so hamstrung the department that its administrative costs toward the close of World War II were actually greater than the benefits paid out to the state's veterans.

Welfare and relief have long constituted one of the important and expensive programs of government in the community, although until the thirties the burden was carried chiefly by the state and local governments. Before that time, the role of the state had been to provide institutional care and to supervise and aid local government in administering relief and welfare programs. Since the passage of the Social Security Act, a distinct break has been made between relief and welfare, the former being left to the county (some aid being furnished by the state) and to the emergency federal agencies; while welfare has been broken up into categorical aids and its administration placed on a cooperative federal-state-local basis. The over-all pattern in the government of welfare, therefore, is a symmetrical one, though there are several "irregular" features that remain in the form of direct administration by central governments. For example, the state continued to supply institutional care and handled directly certain types of case work which required special technical competence.

#### SUMMARY

The foregoing sketch lends itself readily to certain summary observations, the most obvious of which is that within each major function, government has come to be

a joint endeavor of federal, state, and local units. Equally apparent is the fact of variation. From one function to another, there are tremendously wide differences, first, in the extent to which government has penetrated that particular area of the community's life; second, in the comparative importance of the roles being played by the different levels; and third, in the administrative methods being used to do the work of government—federal, state, and local—in the community.



## CHAPTER 5

# Government and Agriculture

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The spectacular developments of the thirties are likely to blind any observer to the earlier history of government in agriculture. Within Blue Earth County, that history for both local and central governments stretches back to the founding of the community, and in its perspective shows the program of the New Deal to be but one recent phase in a continuing expansion of the role of government in agriculture.

Again, one cannot trace this expansion without being struck by the dynamic character of federal and, until recently, state government as contrasted to that of local units. The latter have not been relied on heavily—and never exclusively—either by the local farm population in its search for assistance and security, or by central governments in their administration of local programs. The list of services of local government includes, in order of their appearance, the building of roads and bridges, surveying of public and farm lands, control of insect and animal pests, subsidizing of farm woodlots, support of local fairs and poultry and animal improvement associations, weed inspection, administration of drainage projects, and educational extension. Significantly, each of these services was originally undertaken at the behest of the state and/or upon promise of financial assistance from higher levels.<sup>1</sup>

It became painfully evident that local units would play a lesser role in the development of the community's agriculture when, during the 1870s, a series of disasters broke upon the area and precipitated a rush on the state treasury. Local "pride" asserted itself at the time of the first catastrophe—a tremendous hailstorm that prompted 1300 local farmers to petition the governor and state legislature for relief. The legislature's response was to authorize the county to issue \$5000 in bonds, against which the board might make emergency loans and grants for the purchase of wheat seed; but, sadly enough for the farmers, urban interests turned out in sufficient strength to defeat the proposal at its local referendum. Recourse was finally had to county funds (which accommodated fewer than 10 per cent of the applicants), banks, friends, and relatives.

The story was different shortly afterward when grasshoppers descended on the county and for five successive years wiped out every crop. During the first year of the scourge, the county board made the understandable error of offering a ten-cent bounty for each quart of the insects destroyed. In three days, their bill amounted to

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<sup>1</sup>There is a very great danger of implying too much by this statement. As it stands, it would seem to argue that local units have been completely passive in the development of governmental services affecting agriculture. Actually, much of the state legislation involved was initiated by local citizens and officials who were anxious to expand the activity of local government, and who realized that nothing could be done without statutory approval, added financial resources, or direct administrative action by the higher level of government.

\$14,000; and in nine days, despite a hurried reduction in the price of grasshoppers and finally a cancellation of the bounty altogether, payments had soared to \$31,255.66. This time no one objected when the state intervened, reimbursing the county half the amount paid out in bounties and appropriating further sums to carry on the control program by itself.

Despite the fact that their efforts proved inadequate, local units had shown surprising vigor during the years of the grasshopper plague. The town of Rapidan, for example, appropriated \$1500 for a control program of its own; and the town of Shelby was but one of a number of local units which taxed their citizenry one workday out of each week to be spent eradicating the hoppers.

The plagues of the seventies brought about early, but not the first, wedges of state influence into the agricultural life of the community. This influence was already being felt in an indirect way through the land-grant college recently established under the provisions of the Morrill Act, and through the commissioner of statistics, whose office during the thirty years of its existence (1870 to 1900) constituted an embryonic bureau of agricultural economics. Actual participation at the local level had to wait until the establishment of the agricultural experiment station (1888) and its appointment of staff members, who, like the state entomologist during the chinch bug plague of 1894, came to be of direct assistance to the farm population.

With the appointment of a dairy and food commission in 1885, the state began to deal in earnest with the agricultural sector of its economy. At this time was born the distinction between the developmental and the regulatory aspects of government's role in agriculture which has since served as a dividing line between the state's two departments of agriculture: the one comprising the agricultural college, experiment station, and extension division of the state university and known as the university department of agriculture; the other, the state department of agriculture, dairy, and food which was formed in 1925 by consolidating the original commission with a number of related agencies. The latter department is an agglomeration of enforcement agencies whose duties include inspection of foods, institutions, beverages, seeds, weeds, and produce markets—duties originally undertaken to protect the agricultural interests of the state as well as to assure consumers of a pure and unadulterated product.

Most of the state department's present activities represent assignments made before World War I, though they have been modified by changes in standards, supplemented with newer directives, and augmented by growing instances of collaboration between the department and related agencies of the federal government (e.g., cooperative market reporting and grading of produce). Despite these changes, the department stands almost completely outside the developments which have occurred in the government of agriculture over the past generation. It is not interested in soil conservation, price supports, credit, tenure, research, or education, and has little or nothing to do with the administrative agencies of either the state or federal government involved in such activities.

It has been the other department of agriculture—including the experiment station and extension service of the university college of agriculture, forestry, and home economics—through which the state has expanded its agricultural horizons. Moving cautiously, stubbornly at times, but always under the influence and support of the federal government, this department has continuously added to its scope of action, not only at its university headquarters but also in the field. Mention has already been made of the efforts to disseminate technical information via the Farmers Institutes which flourished before the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914. With that act and the subsequent establishment of the county agent system, the university's department of agriculture became a dynamic factor in the state's agriculture, moving along with the federal government in the trend of the twenties toward a far-reaching action program at the local level.

That program began in 1933, and for a while it appeared that the state, through its extension division, would play an integral part. AAA was but one of the federal agencies which depended for its local success upon the cooperation of the college and of the county agents. However, there arose three conflicts which later resulted in the state's withdrawing almost completely from the newer activities. First, there was an inner struggle over the question of whether it was proper for an educational institution to engage in the administration of a program that had been sponsored by one political party and generally opposed by the other. Second, there was the tangle over personalities and influence: no sooner had the Roosevelt agencies begun to operate than feelings were hurt on both sides, the case of AAA and the extension service being one of the more painful examples. Third, there was a basic incompatibility in politics and in economic beliefs. During the early years of the New Deal when the common plea was for deeds and not creeds, differences in viewpoint between federal and state officials were de-emphasized. By 1935, however, the lines were clearly drawn. Personnel at the college were not so quick to say there was "no damn use for those agencies" as was the state commissioner of agriculture, but they were hardly enthusiastic over the economic philosophy which seemed to be crystallizing within the newer programs.

When the decision was finally made in Minnesota to divorce AAA from the extension service, it served only to emphasize a long-developing trend toward direct, independent federal action in the community ("federal government locally"). It will be remembered that the earlier methods by which the federal government had inserted itself into the field of agriculture (excepting for the moment its distribution of seeds through the post office and its sale of land directly through local land offices) had depended upon the cooperation of the states. The establishment of the land-grant college under the Morrill Act of 1862 was the first example, and became the pattern on which the experiment station and associated action-research agencies (e.g., Bureau of Plant Industry, Bureau of Animal Husbandry) were later to operate. Even the county agent, who was the first direct representative of the federal government in the community, looked to state and local units for administrative direction.

But the same year (1918) that witnessed the arrival of the county agent also saw the establishment of the (cooperative) Madelia National Farm Loan Association, the first in a succession of agencies whose lines of control by-passed local and state units and led directly to the federal government. The second came in 1921, when the federal government began making emergency feed and seed loans through an administrative agency later known as the Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Section of the Farm Credit Association. Two years later, the Mankato Production Credit Association became a third local anchorage for national administrative programs, the parent agency in this instance being the Federal Intermediate Credit Bank.

By 1933, therefore, precedent was well established for direct federal intervention in the agricultural life of the community; the way had been paved for the sudden expansion of federal government locally which was to follow. During the next seven years, Blue Earth County farmers came into contact with the AAA, the Farm Security Administration, the Rural Electrification Administration, the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation—all of them federal agencies having no connection with state or local government.

The frictions and inefficiencies inherent in this separatist approach to the government of agriculture soon became apparent to all parties concerned; but the attempt made by the Mount Weather Agreement of 1938 to integrate federal, state, and local activity did nothing to change the administrative pattern in Blue Earth County. The county did not participate, and whatever benefits the program achieved elsewhere were not applied in Blue Earth.

Nor did war, despite the urgency of the situation it created, have much of an effect on the separatist tendency in local administration. For a short time, agencies



of all levels were brought together in a county war board which had been created for the purpose of coordinating the various programs. But when the key post on the board went to the county AAA chairman, out walked the county agent and with him any opportunities the board might have had for success.

#### THE AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM OF GOVERNMENT IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY

At this stage, it should not be necessary to point out that there is no "agricultural program" in Blue Earth County if one is to use the term in its proper sense. There is only a shifting composite of activities relating to agriculture and to the rural community which are carried on by a loose assortment of agencies and units representing all three levels of government.

The exact number of agencies and activities to be included depends upon how far one is ready to go in his scheme of classification. Here again is the familiar problem of determining the boundary lines of a governmental function—a problem which is complicated by two factors: first, certain activities relate to more than one function; second, the title or administrative status of an agency gives little clue to the nature of its work. An example of the first problem is the question whether or not to include road construction along with electrification—the two contribute equally to rural development, but the custom has been to classify them separately. To illustrate the second difficulty: one cannot blithely include the state department of agriculture merely because of its title. One must first decide whether consumer protection, to which most of the department's efforts are devoted, is properly a part of an "agricultural program."

In the end, whatever classification is adopted can only be intelligently arbitrary, and will always be open to criticism. The following is not intended to be definitive, but is arranged so as to suggest the broader outlines of governmental activity as it bears directly upon agriculture in Blue Earth County, and upon the welfare of the rural community.

If, then, reference may be made to an "agricultural program of government in Blue Earth County," it may be said to include five major areas of activity: (a) conservation and land-use planning; (b) rural credit and development; (c) price supports and the adjustment of production, marketing, and consumption; (d) control of plants and animals; and (e) research and education. To provide these services called for the activity of over a dozen national government agencies (mostly in the Department of Agriculture), a dozen state agencies, the county and other local governments, and five different nongovernmental organizations.

Conservation and Land-Use Planning. The use and condition of land has never been the problem for Blue Earth County that it is for the northern cutover regions of Minnesota or for the cotton-growing areas of the South. Early settlers put the entire county under the plow almost immediately and proceeded—they and the two generations following them—to make a continuous and profitable adjustment between the productivity of the land and the conditions of the market.

Until the thirties that adjustment was generally made on a farm-to-farm basis, with each farmer the judge of how effectively his land was being used. Actually, Blue Earth farmers received more assistance from government than they were likely to admit. The county was early called upon to provide bounties for the planting of farm woodlots and to assume the administration and the maintenance of an expensive network of drainage ditches, which had been initially constructed under the sponsorship of rural associations especially organized for that purpose. Other sources of assistance were the state land-grant college and the experiment station, which made available to local farmers the technical information upon which individual production and marketing



decisions were increasingly being based. From them also stemmed much of the leadership for the shift from grain to dairy production which was accomplished locally during the early years of this century.

It was through the county agent that government made its most strenuous efforts before the New Deal to improve land use and to affect the pattern of production within the county. L. E. MacMillan, county agent until his death in 1949, found that one of his principal assignments during the twenties was to educate the farmers to more effective use of their land, in terms of the soil's productivity and market conditions as forecast by the extension service under its far-flung "Outlook" program. If MacMillan's judgment is accepted, this much of a land-use planning and conservation program was consistent with the needs and character of the county's farmers, resting as it did on the assumption that the initiative lay with the individual farmer. Government's contribution was the gospel of improvement; MacMillan was the evangelist who set up his pulpit at every Farm Bureau meeting and at every local fair.

Since 1933, the principal change in the pattern of governmental action has been effected by AAA. For several years, close liaison was maintained between MacMillan and the Democratic farmers he served who had suddenly been elevated to positions of leadership in this new organization. MacMillan spent long hours in 1934 and 1935 explaining the program, organizing local committees, compiling farm-to-farm statistics on production, and carrying the added load of administrative and office work. But when by 1936 it had become clear that AAA was inescapably a "partisan" program and when experience had given meaning to the precept that the extension service was best fitted for an educational function, the tie between the county agent and AAA was formally dissolved and the county thenceforth treated to a dual program of conservation and land use: the traditional educative service as supplied by MacMillan, and the good-practices system as promoted and financially encouraged by AAA.

Other federal action programs relating to conservation and land use never took hold in Blue Earth County. More than a hundred men of the county were drawn into the Civilian Conservation Corps; but during the five years of its existence, the corps did little actual work within the immediate area. The possibility of establishing a soil conservation district was a recurring topic at local Farm Bureau meetings; both MacMillan and the chairman of the county AAA were called upon to outline the advantage of such action. The almost universal reaction, however, was one of skepticism. In the late thirties, engineers representing the Soil Conservation Service ventured a survey of the area, and recommended a project far too elaborate to gain the interest of the local constituency. The opposition pointed to it as an "extravagance report" and commented: "When SCS comes down to earth, we'll listen." Significantly enough, neither MacMillan nor the AAA chairman presented the case for the SCS project with much enthusiasm; neither did they do much more than shrug their shoulders at the criticisms of the plan.

Another program notable by its absence in Blue Earth County was the Mount Weather Land-Use Planning Program of 1938-43.<sup>2</sup> Since there was no local option allowed, Blue Earth farmers cannot be charged with obstructiveness; but silent commentary can be found in the fact that the state extension people looked elsewhere than to Blue Earth County to find conditions that would augur well for the planning experiment. Twenty years of experience with "Mac" had taught them that he was just as hard to convince of a new idea as were the farmers whom he served.

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<sup>2</sup>The county was also passed over in the choice of areas for the Regional Research Project of 1935.

While the work of AAA and of the county agent comprises the major part of the government program of conservation and land use in the county, there are certain other agencies whose activity bears mentioning. These are the federal and state research organizations that have published reports or analyses of land and land use within Blue Earth County: in 1906, the Soils Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture; in 1934, the state planning board in conjunction with the National Resources Board; in 1938, the Federal Writers' Project of WPA; in 1940, the Minnesota resources commission; and at regular intervals, the Census Bureau. On the other hand, it should be noted that of the three agencies whose titles might seem to indicate an active interest in the conservation and use of agricultural lands—the state departments of conservation and of agriculture, dairy, and food, and the United States Department of the Interior—none carried on any sort of action program in Blue Earth County.<sup>3</sup>

In summary, conservation and land-use planning within the county remains for the most part a private function performed by individual farmers. However much the role of government has expanded, it remains an auxiliary one with an almost complete absence of regulation. The county has shown no inclination to use its newly gained authority to arrange for the zoning of rural lands; equal apathy has been exhibited toward the establishment of anything like a soil conservation district which would provide the means for a more effective control of land development. Even the compliance feature of the AAA program—the single example of regulatory action in the conservation and land-use field—continues to rest on a contractual agreement, although it must be admitted that the financial incentives themselves constitute a means of compulsion. As more than one farmer in the Blue Earth area has phrased it: "We can't afford not to belong."<sup>4</sup>

While limited to an auxiliary role, government still manages to assert a strong influence over the pattern of land use in the county. Its chief instruments of action are AAA<sup>5</sup> and the extension service. Between these two agencies, however, there is a sharp contrast in outlook, approach, and administrative organization. AAA is an action program based on a system of financial incentives, emanating directly from Washington and not yet detached from partisan politics. The extension service is an educational venture sponsored jointly by federal, state, and local governments—old enough and sufficiently responsive to local control to share in the veneration accorded the traditional instruments of local government. Experience indicates that the two cannot be linked administratively. Yet separated they cannot provide an integrated attack by government on the problems of conservation and land-use planning.

One final observation relating to this field is suggested by the fact that the initiative for action has, beginning with the development of the extension system, rested with the state and especially with the federal government rather than with local units. The county continues its work with drainage and may be expected to provide special services on a non-continuing basis; but neither it nor other local units have

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<sup>3</sup>The state department of conservation does maintain local recreational facilities, e.g., Minneopa state park.

<sup>4</sup>It may be noted here without comment that the same farmers will also claim that the good practices for which they are being paid are no different from the ones they performed without incentives before the creation of AAA.

<sup>5</sup>Some indication of the extent of AAA's operations in Blue Earth County can be gained from the following figures. In 1941, there were 2204 farmers participating in the soil conservation program; they received a total of \$471,445.73 in payments. Corresponding statistics for 1943 were 3579 and \$276,612.74; for 1945, 2752 and \$133,498.77.

volunteered a systematic program of action. In part, this may reflect the fiscal inadequacy of local government and its willingness to "pass the buck" to other levels. It reflects even more the fact that no acute land problem exists in Blue Earth County.

Rural Credit and Development. It will be recalled that when the farmers of Blue Earth were forced by the great hailstorm of 1872 to ask the county for assistance, only one in ten was able to obtain the emergency seed loan he asked for. Contrast this credit shortage to the situation in 1945, when eight separate lending agencies were open for business in the county, four of them prepared to make emergency loans.

The expansion of governmental credit facilities over the intervening years is one of the major developments in local agriculture, and gives a clear picture of the centralizing processes at work in the operation of the American system. Starting as an emergency provision made first by local and then by state government, rural credit has come to be almost exclusively a service performed by federal agencies.

Roughly, the history of governmental credit in Blue Earth County can be marked out into three periods: from the founding of the community until World War I; from 1918 to the depression; and from 1933 to the present.

During the first period, the comparatively small amounts of capital needed for farming operations were supplied by local banks or taken from family savings. Government, represented by the county and the state legislature, was called upon to provide either direct subsidies or emergency loans whenever the farming community met with disaster.

By the time of World War I, enough feeling had been aroused about high interest rates and the growing capital needs of the farmer to ensure passage of legislation making credit continuously available in the community, on more or less regularized terms. The first local outlet to be established was the cooperative Madelia National Farm Loan Association authorized under the Federal Farm Loan Act of 1916. This act, it will be recalled, was designed to provide long-term credit to farmers who could offer satisfactory security. To accomplish its purposes, it arranged for a system of land banks, each of which was to rediscount approved notes of local farm loan associations. Five years later, an amendment was added which set up a parallel system of intermediate credit banks to facilitate the making of short-term loans; but the amendment's sole provision for local administration was the allowance that cooperatives, commercial banks, and other financial institutions might rediscount notes with the intermediate credit banks.

During the five-year interval between 1918 and 1923, three other sources of governmental credit were made available to Blue Earth County farmers, all designed for emergency purposes. The first was the result of a Minnesota statute (1919) authorizing the county board to make emergency seed and feed loans, not to exceed two hundred bushels per applicant. According to Bert Lee, Blue Earth County auditor, no one has taken advantage of this provision during his twenty-five years in office. The second emergency credit outlet was established by the federal government as a cushion against the agricultural depression of 1921. By its appropriation act of that year, the Department of Agriculture was authorized to make direct emergency seed loans to the farmers of the country through an agency set up specifically for that purpose. This was the origin of the Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Section which continues to play a direct role in Blue Earth County agriculture. The third agency was added by the state in 1923: the Minnesota department of rural credit, which fought a staying battle until the arrival of the federal credit agencies in 1933, and then retired from the scene. During its years in operation, the department accumulated a sizable portfolio of rural mortgages which it had taken over from both commercial banks and depressed farm owners.



The last phase in the development of local credit facilities has been dominated almost entirely by the federal government. In 1933, Congress began a long series of attempts to bolster its system of agricultural credit, creating a number of new outlets in the community and expanding those already established. First to make its appearance was the Mankato Production Credit Association, another quasi-cooperative like the National Farm Loan Association, but linked with the Intermediate Credit Bank. In 1935, the Resettlement Administration began its operations in the area, at first limited to making rehabilitation loans to low-income farmers, and later (as the Farm Security Administration) broadened to include the tenant-purchase features of the Bankhead-Jones Act. Meanwhile, AAA had entered the field with its commodity loans, and REA with its dual program of credit to cooperatives and (through the cooperatives) to individual consumers. Last to arrive was the Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation, revived during the war to aid in financing the production of essential foods and fibers. Its loan program was administered first by AAA, and after June 30, 1943, by the field supervisor of the Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Section.

In 1945, therefore, the national government stood ready to provide a wide variety of agricultural credits. Long-term credit was available for the purchase of land, buildings, and equipment or for the refinancing of previous mortgages, and short-term credit for the purchase of feed, seed, livestock, and supplies. Credit was extended to farmers who were able to give adequate security, and also to those who, because of ill fortune or limited holdings, could offer only the promise to repay. There was credit for individual farmers or for cooperative associations; for the farmer who needed help during a few low-income months or for one who needed complete rehabilitation; for a farmer anxious to keep his farm, or for a tenant wanting to own one. And during the war, there was credit to encourage production of essential foods and fibers.

Unfortunately, there were nearly as many different administrative agencies as there were types of credit. In all, six federal agencies plus the county board stood ready to serve the rural population: National Farm Loan Association Group 227; Mankato Production Credit Association; Blue Earth-Nicollet REA; Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Section; AAA for the Commodity Credit Corporation; and the Farm Security Administration.

With such an array of agencies, each serving different masters, friction and overlapping were inevitable. Some of the duplication was more apparent than real. In the first place, the county, which never asserted itself in the credit field despite its authorization to provide emergency seed loans, could be ruled out, as could REA and AAA, which operated in spheres of their own. There was no friction between NFLA and PCA: they were housed in the same building, their personnel ate lunch together, and their programs were worked out as complementary rather than competitive. Nevertheless, duplication did exist. Both ECF and FSA concerned themselves with the lot of the low-income farmer, particularly in the matter of short-term production loans. And if there was any doubt as to the reality of their duplication, it did not exist in the minds of the two district supervisors. Their work in the community was constantly attended by controversy, with ECF occupying the favored position. Its supervisor was a hard-bitten veteran in the credit field who had survived the strong resistance of many farmers to mortgage foreclosures and to the payment of their mortgage interest during the Farm Holiday episode of the early thirties. At one time he had faced down a representation of irate farmers in southwestern Minnesota (an area particularly hard-hit during the drought and depression years) who had threatened his life if he persisted in collecting his loans. On a number of other occasions he had demonstrated some unorthodox but effective techniques for handling clients who were inclined to



take their loan obligations lightly.<sup>6</sup> Farmers in the area knew it and respected him. They also knew that FSA was "easier picking," that its district supervisor was a political appointee and the second member of his family to do a mediocre job of farming in the county.

In fact, FSA was the unwanted sister in the local federal family. NFLA and PCA, stepchildren to be sure but now fully grown, were unsparing in their criticism of both its administration and policy. FSA, they argued, was dealing with distressed farmers, and any farmer who could not make a go of it in Blue Earth County did not deserve to be a farmer. Their criticism would undoubtedly have been more vocal had they not been forced to wage a battle on their own grounds with local bankers who, in 1945, had quantities of idle money on hand and memories which did not seem to include their earlier embarrassment with rural investment. In this battle NFLA and PCA were on the defensive—increasingly so as the bank rate of interest continued to drop, the banks adopted the credit techniques worked out by their governmental competitors, and the rural community, once again on its feet financially, returned to its "normal" way of doing things. There were further and cogent reasons for dealing with the banks rather than with the cooperative loan associations. With the former, there was no obligation to use part of the loan as payment for membership stock (on which no dividends have ever been paid by the cooperatives), nor was there the discomforting thought that a record of the transaction would be publicized in the annual report.

Generally, the community is more familiar with the controversy surrounding governmental credit operations than it is with the purposes and accomplishments of each agency. Information concerning the latter is not readily available; it is found only in annual reports (confined to administrative channels or to members of the loan association) or in occasional press notices.

It is a moot question whether study of a more comprehensive report would stimulate the community to a greater interest in local credit operations or bring about any profound change in its attitude toward individual agencies. Actual operating statistics do little more than confirm the impression that Blue Earth County is a prosperous area which normally does not require credit facilities of the kind supplied by ECF and FSA. In 1944, for example, FSA serviced a total of forty loans (twenty-four new, sixteen supplemental) amounting to \$56,180; and ECF, an estimated total of twelve loans amounting to about \$2000. During that same period, however, PCA reported new loans totaling approximately \$400,000. Comparable statistics were not available from the commercial banks.

Data of this sort readily suggest the desirability of a consolidation of local credit facilities, at least of ECF and FSA; and it is well known that local administrators have long been expecting such a move. Most of them fear it, aware that the logic of the situation demands a merger but apprehensive of their own futures. The only person apparently not worried is the administrator of ECF—the only one, incidentally, who has status under civil service.

Aside from other merits the proposal may have, consolidation promises to point up the importance of having a comprehensive program of agricultural credit to meet the

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<sup>6</sup>One borrower had managed to "peddle" his mortgaged crop with such finesse that he was able to secure an extension and even a second loan. The next year he began to boast of his accomplishment and broadcast his intention to default on both notes. ECF's supervisor met the farmer in his corn field, gave him a verbal lacing, hired a truck, loaded the farmer's storage crops from their bins onto the truck, sold them, subtracted the amount due, and used the remainder to pay off a share of the farmer's other debts.

changing requirements of a developing agricultural economy. Until now this need has been obscured by the confusion of agencies, methods, and objectives. All the local credit programs involve stated purposes and conditions, and all of them call for varied amounts of supervision once a loan has been consummated. The purposes, however, range from AAA's attempt to influence the pattern of land use and to enhance the value of farm products to FSA's desire to speed the economic progress of the lower income farmers. Methods of supervision vary from the strong-arm tactics of ECF to the businesslike formality of the cooperative associations. Though diversity may be desirable, here it has been carried to such lengths as to obstruct clear vision of the over-all objectives of government's role in agricultural credit, and to lead to a situation in which governmental agencies work at cross purposes.

The importance of agricultural credit for rural development is most clearly seen in the work of REA, which has been spared competition from any other governmental agency. As might have been expected, rivalry developed between the local cooperative and the Northern States Power Company, a privately owned local electric utility; but it did not become serious, since the company had earlier taken what it wanted of the rural business and left REA to develop the wide-open, sparsely settled spaces. Despite this loss of advantage, REA managed to build up a going concern during its first eight years in operation. By the close of 1945, the local cooperative had energized 1000 miles of line, had expanded into nine counties, and was servicing over 2200 consumers.<sup>7</sup> Further, the cooperative had repaid the full amount of its loan (\$9510) with the Electric Home and Farm Authority, and had returned over 25 per cent of the \$870,000 received from REA.

Four observations seem adequate to describe the credit role of government in local agriculture. First, that role has been developed in piecemeal fashion, according to the general formula of a new agency for each new service. Second, the federal government is currently monopolizing the role. Third, the federal government had not succeeded by 1945 in coordinating its local services, and as a result had not been able to communicate its objectives as fully as it might. Fourth, despite these administrative drawbacks, the federal government had effectively relieved the credit shortage of the community's earlier years.

Price Support and the Adjustment of Production, Marketing, and Consumption. It is easy to overlook the part played by local government in helping to ensure fair prices for agricultural produce. By providing a network of roads and stimulating the early development of rail and other transport, local units have greatly facilitated the processes of production and marketing. But local government has not been used by rural interests in Blue Earth County to attack the central problems of price and production adjustment.

In Minnesota, the first attempt to ensure farmers a maximum return on their product was the drive to place railroad and storage rates under the control of the state. The success of the drive led to the establishment of the state railroad commission in 1872. Having thus proved their political strength, the rural interests in the state proceeded to consolidate their positions. Dividing into groups according to the products they were interested in, they enacted a series of protective measures designed to prevent the loss of their respective markets—thus the restrictions on oleomargarine and other "adulterated" dairy products. Next they established the state dairy and food commission to enforce these measures.

During the period which followed—roughly from the appointment of the railroad commission in 1872 to the reorganization of the dairy and food commission into the

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<sup>7</sup>Approximately 1300 of REA's consumers lived within Blue Earth County. This left a total of 450 farm families still without electricity.



department of agriculture, dairy, and food in 1925—the state rather than the federal or local government was looked to as the most effective means of improving the farmer's lot. As noted, the functions and philosophy of the department have never advanced beyond this period, except in the fields of marketing, reporting, and grading. Subsequent efforts made through the federal government to attack the price and income problem by direct manipulation of the market and by direct adjustment of production and consumption have gone completely beyond the scope of the department's action and thinking.

For the past twenty-five years, Blue Earth County farmers have looked to Washington to provide the conditions under which they could be assured of high prices and/or an adequate income. A number of cumulative influences can be pointed to as having caused this shift in their political attention, all of them stemming originally from the dominant role assumed by the federal government during World War I. Formation of the farm bloc and the federation of the Farm Bureau into a national pressure group—both in response to this assertion of federal leadership—constituted one such influence. Another was McNary-Haugenism; there had always been the tariff, but never with such dramatic promise. A third factor was the growing faith, popularized by the extension service, in the possibilities of economic forecasting, especially when implemented as in the Marketing Act of 1929.

Four years of depression and the explosive entrance upon the scene of the New Deal established beyond doubt the pre-eminence of the federal government in dealing with the price problem. Nursed along with production and price controls under AAA and the Commodity Credit Corporation, and consumption adjustment under the Surplus Commodity Corporation, the agricultural element in Blue Earth County has gained a deep respect for the effectiveness of federal action—despite the apparent ingratitude it regularly exhibits by supporting the Farm Bureau's platform and, after 1936, the Republican ticket. One may disagree with the underlying principles of AAA—as many of the county's farmers do—but it is difficult to deny the reality of the half-million dollars in conservation payments returned to the county in 1941, and nearly as difficult to refuse a share in them.

Ironic though it may be, this paradoxical reaction to the New Deal farm program affords an excellent index to the political behavior of the Blue Earth farm community. On the one hand, there is a strong undercurrent of conservatism which does not allow anyone within its reach to swim for long against it. On the other hand, there is the natural reluctance to lose out financially, especially when everyone else is gaining and the money is coming eventually from taxes. The result in Blue Earth County has been widespread membership in AAA and an increasing tendency to ease one's political conscience by voting against it. Thus the well-to-do farmer who carries his AAA check in his pocket for a week finally cashes it and then, in an overt act of penance, cusses out the New Deal at the next Farm Bureau meeting.

The exact figures on AAA's local operation are revealing. In 1934, over 75 per cent of the county's 3500 farmers participated in the program, and shared wheat and corn-hog benefits amounting to \$372,928.06. In 1941, 2204 (or seven eighths) of the county's farmers received a total of \$471,445.73 in conservation payments. During that same year, additional payments of \$35,084.72 went to subsidize the local production of sugar beets, and another estimated \$250,000 was distributed as dairy, sheep, and beef subsidies. During the remaining years of the war, membership went up (2752 in 1945), conservation payments down (\$133,498.77 in 1945) and subsidies rose



steadily.<sup>8</sup> Still, despite this largess AAA members refused to display interest in the actual running of the program. Uniformly during this period an average of twenty farmers in each township attended the scheduled annual meetings. Roughly, this figure represented 20 per cent of the number eligible to attend—about the same percentage, it might be added, as attend the annual township meetings.

Consumption adjustment, the last phase of the triple-threat attack by government on the price problem, appeared in Blue Earth County as a welfare program. Detailed statistics as to its costs and benefits are not available;<sup>9</sup> but during the several years before the war when the program was in operation, it received strong local endorsement. Its advantages were obvious to the farmers, whose markets were thereby expanded, and to the county board, whose welfare program was given a material lift. But the idea held a wider appeal. By avoiding the waste and restrictive character of AAA and by putting surplus food to good use, the program made sense to the community. Whatever the administrative hardships, the plan was carried out with a minimum of complaint. The only serious criticisms were those directed at errors of judgment in the purchase or distribution of supplies.

In review, then, the historical development of governmental action in this field has produced two major trends: first, a shift in attention from the improvement of marketing facilities to a direct concern with agricultural production, consumption, and prices. Second, an increased dependence upon the federal government rather than the state or local government as the principal medium of action.

This does not imply, however, that the state's current role is an insignificant one; it continues to provide regulatory, inspectional, and informational services, without which the marketing of agricultural products could not be carried on effectively. Further, it continues to strengthen those services by cooperating closely with federal agencies having similar assignments. An interesting example of such cooperation is the State-Federal Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, a project carried on jointly by the state department of agriculture, dairy, and food and the United States Marketing Service. In addition to broadcasting daily market reports, the service has published annually since 1922 a complete statistical record of production within the state. The record is constructed on the basis of information volunteered by farmers, farm organizations, processors, and government officers located in the state's nine reporting districts.

Also to be considered as part of the state's contribution is the supervision exercised by its railroad and warehouse commission over certain aspects of the marketing process: for example, weighing of livestock, inspection and weighing of grain, and licensing and bonding of warehouses.

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<sup>8</sup>Total wartime subsidies for dairy, sheep, and beef production amounted to \$1,201,781.15 by the end of 1945. Total payments for production of sugar beets were reported as amounting to \$16,965.41 for the year 1943, and to \$12,578.46 for 1945. The decline in the latter year was more than offset by the continued increase in dairy subsidies.

<sup>9</sup>Stamps were issued by the county welfare board to certified relief clients, and were backed by federal grants which arrived via the same channels as regular welfare funds. The county kept them available in a "Commodity Stamp Fund" until distributed. In 1942, the fund amounted to \$7500 of which \$1500 was put into circulation during the year.

Control of Plants and Animals. Every level of government and, with the exception of school districts, every unit is actively engaged in the "program" to wipe out plant and animal disease and to prevent damage by noxious weeds and animal pests.

Local governments have been longest in the fight, their first recorded action having been the dismal battle waged against the grasshoppers from 1873 to 1877. Before the people finally turned to prayer,<sup>10</sup> they had pressed the towns into service, exhausted the funds of the county, and secured the assistance of the state. But grasshoppers were not the only menace. During the post-Civil War period, towns and counties alike had posted bounties for the destruction of wolves and other marauders,<sup>11</sup> and the county had offered further rewards for the eradication of certain types of weeds.<sup>12</sup>

The decade of the eighties added significantly to the scope of governmental action in this field. At the state level, the board of health assumed responsibility for the control of animal disease, and was given authority to supervise the related efforts of local boards of health. Almost simultaneously with this development, the responsibility for inspecting local dairy herds was assigned to the newly created dairy and food commission.

At the federal level, expansion was just as rapid. In 1881 the Division of Entomology (later the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine) was created; in 1884, the Bureau of Animal Husbandry ("to prevent the exportation of diseased cattle, and to suppress and extirpate pleuro-pneumonia and other contagious diseases"); and in 1888, the state experiment station as headquarters for a growing number of plant and animal specialists.

Subsequent years have been marked by a steady development of administrative organization at both state and federal levels, as well as by a broadening of the statutory basis for action. Important gains for the federal government were the Meat Inspection Act of 1890, the Animal Quarantine Act of 1901, and the Plant and Quarantine Act of 1912. The state added an entomologist, a sizable staff of inspectors, and the livestock sanitary board, not to mention the continuous development of its regulatory code.

Local government has broadened its field of operation in only one major respect: compliance with the statutory requirement that local weed inspectors be appointed for the summer months by the county and/or the individual towns, villages, and cities.

Once more, therefore, the historical pattern is one of expanding activity at the state and federal levels, with only limited development in the services of local units.

In this particular area of the agricultural program, however, the Blue Earth community, though directly benefiting from the increase in state and federal services, has only a partial view of their performance. This is true in the case of those specialized services which can be performed most conveniently at one central point—for

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<sup>10</sup>Legend, apparently well established, relates a total disappearance of the grasshoppers within a week after the prayer-fest.

<sup>11</sup>From 1865 to 1872, the county had on its books a standing offer of \$200 for each scalp of a hostile Indian. No one ever collected.

<sup>12</sup>Custom has established that for the bounties paid out by local units in the control of noxious plants and animals they will be reimbursed in whole or in part by the state. Objections raised to this practice by the state auditor only resulted in legislative action confirming it.

example, the work of the resident inspector of the Division of Domestic and Foreign Plant Quarantine (United States Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine) which consists of inspecting foreign, interstate, and intrastate shipments as they pass through the post office in St. Paul; similarly, the inspection of animals brought to the South St. Paul stockyards, a task carried out by a veterinarian from the staff of the state livestock sanitary board. It is also true of the control programs sponsored cooperatively by state and federal agencies stationed on the farm campus of the state university. These programs are carried out on a statewide basis, and locally within Blue Earth County only when scheduled or found necessary. They include:

1. Barberry eradication, directed jointly by the state entomologist (department of agriculture, dairy, and food), the university's division of plant pathology and botany, and a staff pathologist detailed by the United States Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine.<sup>13</sup> Blue Earth County has been covered twice by barberry eradication crews during the past ten years, the first time with the help of a WPA crew.

2. Insect control, carried on by the state entomologist with the assistance of federal personnel from the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine. The control program includes regular inspections of local nurseries and apiaries, as well as occasional trips into the community to check on reports of damage or disease attributable to insects.<sup>14</sup>

3. Bang's disease and TB testing, sponsored jointly by the state livestock sanitary board and the United States Bureau of Animal Industry. The most recent testing program conducted within Blue Earth County came in 1944-45, and was administered by local veterinarians working on a per diem basis.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, there are a number of control programs which are in continuous operation locally. Weed inspection is one of them. The county board is authorized to appoint one or more weed inspectors, for a period of from two to five months, to enforce Minnesota laws relating to noxious weeds and to supervise and cooperate with inspectors who may have been appointed by towns, villages, and cities within the county. All are designated local weed inspectors to be paid by the unit appointing them; and all are responsible in their work to the state commissioner of agriculture.<sup>16</sup> What usually happens is that no more than a half dozen towns appoint inspectors and the county is left to foot the major share of the bill—though it is never

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<sup>13</sup>The bureau is also concerned with blister rust control (in which it collaborates with the state department of conservation) and with the control of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets. The latter program is directed from the bureau's regional office in Denver.

<sup>14</sup>Chapter 18, Minnesota Statutes, 1945, contains the interesting but unused provision that "when recommended by the commissioner and entomologist, the county is authorized to appropriate money and to appoint a supervisor for the control of insect pests. Both shall be supervised by the state entomologist."

<sup>15</sup>Chapter 35, Minnesota Statutes, 1945, goes to considerable lengths in outlining a procedure which would involve the county in TB and Bang's disease testing programs. To judge from the arrangements followed in the testing project just completed, the livestock sanitary board finds it more convenient to work directly with local veterinarians.

<sup>16</sup>The commissioner, in turn, works closely with the United States Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, bringing to that agency's attention cases coming under the interstate provisions of the Federal Seed Law.



large.<sup>17</sup> In 1945, a fairly representative year, the few towns and villages which provided for weed inspection spent, on the average, \$25, leaving the county with a total bill of \$3394.73. Of this amount, approximately \$900 went to pay the salaries and traveling expenses of the weed inspectors. Almost all the rest was paid to the Farm Bureau Service Company, which had a virtual monopoly on the local business of spraying weeds.

Three other control programs operate locally, one federal and two state-local. AAA, as part of its conservation activity, has regularly offered benefits for mowing weeds on non-crop open pastures, and for using sodium chlorate and borax as weed killers. The county, on the promise of partial reimbursement by the state, still offers bounties for the destruction of wolves, foxes, crows, and gophers—and local sharpshooters continue to collect. Total claims in 1945, a banner year, amounted to nearly \$1300, most of which went to the killers of foxes.

Finally, there is the constant check on animal diseases which is exercised nominally through the local boards of health under the supervision of the state livestock sanitary board, but which actually is conducted by local veterinarians acting as the board's spotters and quarantine agents.

To summarize: the control of harmful or diseased plants and animals is an activity common to all levels of government. In Blue Earth County, local units were the first to undertake the function; but state and federal governments, having once entered the field, greatly expanded and perfected their measure of control in order to cope with the complications of a growing agricultural economy. By 1945, the situation was such that a single community could comprehend only a small part of the total program of control; most services were performed elsewhere. Of the activity which remained to be carried out locally, a very small amount was sponsored by local units independently, a much larger share was handled by state and local units cooperatively, and a certain amount was performed separately by federal agencies.

Considering the range and extent of the control program and the number of governmental organizations involved, a remarkable degree of coordination has been achieved.

Research and Education. Comparatively little agricultural research has been carried on by government within the local area. The simple reason is that the field has been almost completely pre-empted by state and federal agencies, who have chosen to conduct their research elsewhere. To be sure, local officials have often been asked or required to participate in projects varying from merely statistical surveys to complex field studies; but at no time have they undertaken an independent program of inquiry or scientific development.

Although removed from the scene of research, the Blue Earth farming community has not been uninformed as to results. There have always been informal meeting places where new ideas could be broached and spread about: family reunions, barn buildings, association meetings, and Saturday nights in town. But there have also been a number of formalized channels of information which government has either established or helped to maintain.

At least three such channels were open to the community during the years before the founding of the Minnesota experiment station. First, through enrollment in the land-grant college of the state university; second, through membership in subsidized organizations such as the state Dairymen's Association; third, through attendance at

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<sup>17</sup>In addition, complains the commissioner, these inspectors fail to familiarize themselves with the law or otherwise to take their work seriously.

the annual state and county fairs, both of which have always relied heavily on governmental support.

Until 1888, there was little to pass on to the community in the way of governmental research. But with the experiment station as a source of information, new methods of educating the rural community were quickly devised—for example, "agricultural trains" and the Farmers Institutes referred to earlier. These attempts were greeted in individual cases with the stubborn cynicism of which only a successful farmer is capable; but as an instrument of policy, they had gained the support of the state legislature (to the extent of about \$20,000 a year) and equally important, the active interest of local Farmers Alliances, then dominant in the agricultural life and politics of the community.

Farmers Institutes gave way in 1918 to the team of Farm Bureau and county agent, soon joined by the latter's counterpart among farm women, the home demonstration agent. Next to put in an appearance was the agricultural instructor appointed by the Mankato school district under the provisions of the George-Deen Act. Last have come the action agencies of the New Deal, each of them attempting to improve conditions in the rural community. Of particular interest are the district and home supervisors employed by FSA to fulfill much the same function among the farmers they serve as that performed on a broader scale by the county and home demonstration agents.

There are, then, at least five governmental employees who are expressly charged to serve as agricultural missionaries in Blue Earth County: the county and home demonstration agents, the high school instructor in agriculture, and the district and home supervisors of FSA. These five have managed to work without friction. For one reason, the county agent's son served as FSA's district supervisor until the war. A more fundamental reason is that there is ample work to go around, especially since the home supervisor of FSA is asked to serve seven additional counties. The time she is able to spend with FSA borrowers in the county, themselves a small fraction of the county's farm population, is considered by both FSA and extension as welcome assistance to the overworked county agent.

Between the agent and the agricultural instructor there seems to be complete rapport. Not much is heard of the work of the instructor which includes, in addition to his classes among the regular high school students, evening classes with adults. The latter are occasionally attended or addressed by the county agent, a practice strongly encouraged by the extension service.<sup>18</sup>

The agent himself is not entirely an officer of government. For all practical purposes, including supervision and pay, he is an employee of the local Farm Bureau. Regardless of departmental policy on the matter, the agent will attend most Farm Bureau meetings, and spearhead the Farm Bureau's annual membership drive. His job, according to the statutes, depends upon his maintaining a 30 per cent membership among the farmers of the county. In Blue Earth, thanks to the effective work of the incumbent and to the comparatively secure status of the farmers, membership has usually totaled over 40 per cent.

The charge that the agent in Blue Earth County deals only with the upper third or half of the population is true. But the segment which is by-passed is not much lower

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<sup>18</sup>See Minnesota Extension Policy Letters of April 6 and November 22, 1938. The former recommends further that each agent send to all vocational instructors in his county a letter of invitation to each and every event in which the instructor or his pupils may be interested, or could be a cooperating agency."

in economic or social status. Members of this group remain out of the Farm Bureau for reasons which give them as much inner satisfaction as does membership to those who join. Moreover, they can get what the agent has to give, across the fence from friends, from their children, if they are members of 4-H, from their farm journals, through AAA, FSA, or the county fair.

The community, then, loses nothing in not being at the center of agricultural research. With the many channels of information open to him at the community level, any farmer can with little effort keep in touch with progress in the field and obtain expert advice. Generally speaking, he will find that he is indebted to the state and federal governments for research, and to all levels of government for education.



## CHAPTER 6

### Government and Health

The foregoing study of agriculture has shown what a splintering effect the uncoordinated growth of government at all three levels has had upon local administration. The field of public health is an even more striking illustration. In Blue Earth County in 1945, the year for which the following account is valid, there was no integrated program of public health—only a loose aggregate of organizations and services bearing directly or incidentally upon the health of the community.

In 1945, this fragmentation of health activity had reached the point where a major research effort proved necessary merely to identify and catalogue the different services involved.<sup>1</sup> Bulky and prosaic as the resulting inventory may seem, it nevertheless remains an essential part of any attempt to describe the existing pattern of public health in the community.

But an inventory is not enough. Public health in Blue Earth County is more than a collection of agencies and services; it is also a complex of personalities, atmosphere, and tradition.

It is possible, for instance, to explain local arrangements largely in terms of three individuals, one a woman of saintly character and devotion to her work, the others carrying on in her tradition. The first was Helen Hughes Hielscher, a woman physician in the community who gained national prominence for her work in the field of public health. Sparked by her interest and leadership, the people of the community came alive to the need for a broader program of public health than mere consumer protection and environmental sanitation. At her urging they endorsed the founding of the Blue Earth Public Health Association and the establishment of the county public health nursing service.

These organizations are still governed by her administrative philosophy. She was convinced that any financial or operational link with larger organizations—particularly the federal government—would undermine the effectiveness of the local program, and that there would be too much leakage in the flow of funds from local to central and back to local hands to risk a financial union. She believed, too, that if the program were left to depend on non-local sources for even part of its support, it would soon lose its vital grounding in community interest and participation. Her view has prevailed. On her recommendation, the county has turned down public health grants-in-aid, and the county Public Health Association has steadfastly issued and sold its own kind of Christmas seals.

"Dr. Helen's" influence persists in the persons of Dr. A. G. Liedloff and Miss Clara Paschke. The former is a veteran of the Spanish-American War, the leading member of the Blue Earth County Public Health Association, a county health officer for

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<sup>1</sup>See A Study of Public Health Administration in Blue Earth County (Mankato: Council on Intergovernmental Relations, 1946).

as long as most citizens can remember, and during World War II, director of the local district health unit of the state department of health. Slow-moving and intensely local in his thinking, Dr. Liedloff keeps a tight rein on the administration of public health in the community. He relies for his control upon the influential position he holds in the association rather than upon his two governmental offices, neither of which gives him any appreciable authority. His comments reflect both his personality and the temper of local public health programs.<sup>2</sup>

Miss Paschke has been the county nurse since the position was created in 1923. She is middle-aged, squarely built, and an inveterate moral philosopher. Her homespun maxims, touching on everything from health to heaven, are formulated in spiritual company with "Dr. Helen" and they assure her of a friendly reception wherever she goes.

Her office in the county courthouse is a dreary combination of high ceiling, tall windows, and mountainous stacks of reports and informational literature; but with the headquarters of the state's district health unit, located across the hall in a smaller office, it serves as the central meeting-place for those engaged in public health work in the county. To the district unit come activity reports from all local public health personnel; through the county nurse's office are channeled the affairs of the Public Health Association, membership in which provides a bond among public health workers, practicing physicians and dentists, and interested lay members of the community.

The enthusiasm of this central core supports the local public health program of county (and state), but it goes so far and no further. They respond to appeals and pressures for an expanded local program, but not for "socialized medicine" or even for federal aid. Their opposition on this score is shared by the community at large. Unfortunately, the citizens also object to paying more taxes for expanding services even in the traditional area of public health. The taxpayer's reaction is one reason for community opposition to federal measures. Another is that public health touches the individual directly, and is almost as intimate and sacrosanct as religion.

Consequently the climate of local opinion is against the further entrance of government into most areas of public health, and in favor of private medicine and individual responsibility. This sentiment has been strengthened by the continued prosperity of the community, and by such other factors as the tight organization of professional medical personnel and the success of voluntary group action. The last is illustrated by the energetic programs of the Public Health Association, Red Cross, and Community Chest, and by the development of excellent private hospital facilities. Of the three local hospitals, only one—the Mankato Detention Hospital for Contagious Diseases—is under public management. The lone attempt by local governments to establish a general hospital came in 1887, and then only by reason of a private donation for that purpose. Ten years later, the hospital was turned over to the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, who managed it until 1899 when construction of the present Catholic hospital was completed. Significantly, the next hospital was Immanuel Hospital, built in 1906 by Lutherans as a countermove, and not by government in the interest of the community at large.

The bedrock of the community's resistance to governmental health measures is struck whenever an attempt is made to use compulsion, as in the enforcement of sanitary regulations. Here, more often than not, the law yields to the sentiments of the community: local enforcement officers, with the exception of the milk inspector of the city of Mankato, do not take their work seriously and have learned from bitter experience the wisdom of this attitude. To illustrate, there is the case of the physician who, in his capacity as health officer for the village of Mapleton (salary:

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<sup>2</sup>These comments have been entered as footnotes to the sections which follow.

\$25 per year), finally decided to take action against a poultry dealer across the street from his office. For years, the dealer had been cleaning chickens on the sidewalk in front of his store without bothering to clear away the remains. The good doctor first tried a friendly suggestion; when that failed, he issued an order to comply within the usual ten days. The dealer promptly removed the offending substance from the sidewalk and changed the scene of his unpleasant operations to his own back yard—approximately fifty feet from the front porch of the doctor's home. The practice continued for an uncomfortable length of time; and when the entrails once more began to appear on the sidewalk, there were no further official objections.

Not only local officials but state authorities as well realize that they tread on hallowed ground. Since 1883, the board of health has nominally exercised supervisory powers over local health officers, but in practice this power has rarely been used. The board admits that its policy is to serve local units in an advisory capacity and that to follow a more aggressive line would be disastrous to its own program.<sup>3</sup>

The reactions of the community are not all negative. While it is true that in the main local thought favors private medicine and individual responsibility, there are a number of factors which have encouraged the progress of collective action. Especially important have been those advances in medical and engineering science that foreshadow potential improvements in public health—milk pasteurization, for example. As knowledge of these is diffused through the ranks of local professional personnel, they capture the interest of a community bent on progress, and eventually, through the social consciousness of individuals like Dr. Hielscher, they almost always culminate in another governmental health activity. No less impelling, as John Gaus has noted,<sup>4</sup> are catastrophes—emergencies such as Mankato's typhoid epidemic of 1908 and recurrent periods of war. Last but not least is the familiar urge to emulate successful programs undertaken by other communities.

The community, too, has always expected government to provide facilities of a traditional and broadly social nature. The operation of mental and other specialized institutions by the state dates back to the Civil War period, and has not been seriously questioned by the community. Direct medical relief has always been available to those unable to afford private attention; when not forthcoming from charitable organizations, it has been given by the county and occasionally by the cities and villages.

One is left, then, with the picture of a community whose natural instinct is to move as slowly toward governmental health measures as circumstances, common sense, the logic of scientific advance, and legally imposed standards will allow. Given this perspective, it is easier to appreciate the slow growth and somewhat rudimentary state of public health services in Blue Earth County.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Initiative in local health matters was assumed at the outset by private physicians. Although there is no record of the date of arrival of the county's first doctor, local physicians were organized into a medical association as early as 1865.

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<sup>3</sup>This impression is confirmed by Edward Weidner in "State Supervision of Local Government in Minnesota," Public Administration Review, 4:226-33 (Autumn 1944), and in Philip D. Jordan's The People's Health, A History of Public Health in Minnesota to 1948 (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1953). Editors' Note: On this policy see also in general Laurence Wyatt, Intergovernmental Relations in Public Health (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1951), pp. 134-68.

<sup>4</sup>John Merriman Gaus, Reflections on Public Administration (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1947), p. 9.



Apparently, they served their patients satisfactorily, but they were not able immediately to change the collective health habits of the community. As one writer recalled: "Those were care-free times for germs. School youngsters exchanged slates and licked them clean of pencil marks; a cud of gum passed through the whole school; and all drank from the same big dipper, pouring back what each one didn't drink—a fine pool of happy little demons."<sup>5</sup>

With such practices, it is not surprising that epidemics were a serious and recurring threat during the early years. Lime Township alone, during the winter of 1878-79, recorded forty-five fatal cases of diphtheria. Emergencies like this served to emphasize the inadequacy of public health measures then in effect. In 1858, towns had been assigned limited powers of a public health nature; and in 1866, town boards were designated as local boards of health. Compliance was perfunctory and had no noticeable effect on local conditions. By 1872, the legislature was ready to assert state leadership, and did so by creating the state board of health as an advisory service to local units. Further, it required cities (and permitted villages) to establish health boards of their own.

The precautions added in 1872-73 were not enough, as the Lime Township and other epidemics proved; and the legislature renewed its efforts during the eighties to improve methods of protection. In 1883, it moved the state board of health into a position of direct command over the activities of local health authorities. Further, it commissioned the board to govern affairs of animal health, placed a laboratory at the board's disposal, created a dairy and food commission (1885) to inspect dairy herds and food products, and appointed examining boards to police the medical and dental professions.

Meanwhile, local units were taking steps of their own in the field of environmental sanitation. Mankato constructed its first public sewage system in 1887, Mapleton its water system in 1889 and its sewage system in 1901; and at least two other villages followed suit by 1910. Without exception, however, these systems were primitive, averaging in cost no more than \$7000. Cognizant of this low level of performance, the state pushed forward with programs of supervision. In 1897, the legislature created a board of plumbing examiners; and in 1905, it authorized expansion of the state board of health's staff to include sanitary engineers, assigned to survey local facilities and to assist in their construction.

They did not manage to spare Mankato the tragic results of faulty construction. In 1908, as a result of a back-up of sewage into the water mains, the city suffered a typhoid epidemic which brought death to forty citizens. Reaction was immediate. How intense it was can be read in the testimony of citizens who successfully contended for the liability of the city for tort,<sup>6</sup> and in the arguments which brought about the adoption of the commission form of government only three years later.

Despite the Mankato epidemic and the scare-tactics of contemporary muckrakers, local units other than Mankato remained apathetic toward problems of public health. Progress had to await action at the state and national levels. Such action had, indeed, begun considerably earlier. The state in 1901 relieved the board of health of its responsibility for health control over animals, had strengthened the program, and had transferred it to the newly created livestock sanitary board. In 1905, the legislature expanded the activity of the board of health to much its present scope, and in

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<sup>5</sup>Mankato Free Press, Fiftieth Anniversary Edition, April 5, 1937.

<sup>6</sup>See *Keever v. City of Mankato*, 113 Minn. 55, 1910. The epidemic apparently was among the factors later influencing the decision of the state board of health to locate one of its regional laboratories in Mankato (1912).

the process added a staff of sanitary engineers and epidemiologists. The year 1907 saw the development of a staff of health and accident inspectors within the bureau of labor, industries, and commerce, and the establishment of a board of examiners for nurses. Three more state examining boards followed in 1913 for optometrists, osteopaths, and veterinarians, respectively.

Meanwhile, the federal government was also becoming involved in public health. Although there is nothing to show that its activity before 1914 carried directly into the local area, the following provisions nevertheless indicate the parallel course of federal development: appointment of a National Board of Health in 1879; creation of the Bureau of Animal Husbandry in 1884; emergence of the Public Health Service between 1902 and 1912; organization of enforcement work under the Pure Food Act of 1906 within the Department of Agriculture; and establishment of the Children's Bureau in 1912.<sup>7</sup>

This pre-World War I pattern of governmental action in the field of public health was limited to consumer protection and environmental sanitation. Government was not providing medical care directly to individuals, except in the case of welfare patients or veterans eligible for institutional care. The break-through into this area of public health came with the expansion of federal activity during World War I, particularly in the attempt to control venereal disease.

The tradition of working directly with individuals was strengthened after 1921, when the federal government made funds available for the development of state and local programs in maternal and infant care. Minnesota accepted these grants, but Blue Earth County decided to establish its own nursing service independently of state and federal governments. The tradition of direct medical aid was further strengthened during this period by the Mankato school district's appointment of a school nurse, by the opening of the University Hospital in Minneapolis to local relief patients, and by Mankato's acquiring a detention hospital for contagious disease.

The final surge of public health activity began with the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935 and reached its crest in the national health programs of World War II. Its contribution to the existing public health program in Blue Earth County will be described later in this chapter.

#### THE PUBLIC HEALTH "PROGRAM"

The following section presents a conspectus of public health activity within Blue Earth County in 1945, and is designed to show the complexity of administration at the local level. It has been organized into four parts: a brief résumé of governmental organization for local public health work; a detailed inventory of the local public health activity; a reference to non-governmental organizations and their contribution to the community's health program; and some notes on how this agglomeration of agencies and activities is held together.

Again, as with agriculture, one is faced with the problem of defining the field of study—and the problem in health is even more complicated than in agriculture. The problem has been arbitrarily resolved by adopting the American Public Health Association's list of six basic fields: reporting of vital statistics, control of communicable diseases, environmental sanitation, personal hygiene and care, laboratory

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<sup>7</sup>See Lloyd M. Short, The Development of National Administrative Organization in the United States (Urbana, Ill., 1923), passim.

service, and health education.<sup>8</sup> This functional classification has not simplified the task of research and description. As one quickly discovers from the accompanying chart, the score or more of individual activities which make up the basic fields are tucked away in every nook and cranny of the community's government, and it takes almost as long to list them as to find them.

Federal, State, and Local Public Health Functions in Blue Earth County

Public Health Functions	FEDERAL										STATE										LOCAL									
	U.S. Marshal's Office Department of Agriculture Office of Education Social Security Board Children's Bureau Food and Drug Administration Public Health Service										Minnesota Examining Boards Department of Agriculture, Dairy, and Food Livestock Sanitary Board Water Pollution Control Commission Department of Conservation Department of Labor and Industry Department of Social Security State University Board of Health District Health Unit No. 2 Mankato Teachers College										County Cities Villages Towns School Districts Non-governmental Organizations									
Six basic functions																														
Reporting vital statistics																														
Communicable disease control	*																													
Laboratory service	*																													
Education	*	*																												
Hygiene and care					*																									
Environmental sanitation																														
Enforcement and inspection																														
Water supply	*																													
Nuisance abatement																														
Milk supply	*																													
Retail food and restaurants																														
Creameries and food plants																														
Cold storage																														
Jails	*																													
Hotels and resorts																														
Related services																														
Disposal of waste																														
Water supply																														
Hospitals																														
Conditions of labor																														
Nutrition	*	*																												
Recreation																														
Medical care of poor																														
Group health	*																													
Policing occupations and professions																														
Distribution of biologics																														

<sup>8</sup>See Haven Emerson, Local Health Units for the Nation (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1945), especially p. 2. See also the Evaluation Schedule of the American Public Health Association, published annually by the Committee on Administrative Practices for use in appraising local health programs.



Governmental Organizations Which in 1945 Shared in the  
Public Health "Program" in the County

The National Government

The Federal Security Agency was represented by the United States Public Health Service and the Food and Drug Administration—with highly important health functions, and the Social Security Board, the United States Office of Education, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, with at least fringe responsibilities in public health. Also operating in the county were the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor, which promoted child and maternal health, and the United States Department of Agriculture. Within the latter organization were the Farm Security Administration, which functioned to help low-income farmers get medical assistance by promoting the establishment of semi-cooperative medical associations in the rural areas,<sup>9</sup> and the Bureau of Animal Industry, which, through grants-in-aid and cattle-testing programs, helped to reduce disease among animals and to protect consumers against impure milk.

The State Government

The State Board of Health had under its jurisdiction the department of health,<sup>10</sup> and within the department the divisions of administration, rural health services, public health education, child hygiene, public health nursing, birth and death records and vital statistics, hotel inspection, preventable diseases, sanitation, industrial health, and dental health.

Within the department of agriculture, dairy, and food were the following divisions: dairy and food inspection, marketing—including the egg and poultry section and the cold storage section, and canning and beverage inspection. The state live-stock sanitary board is directed by law to work closely with local boards of health in the control of animal disease and environmental sanitation.

In the department of social security is the division of public institutions, which administers the state's nineteen hospitals and welfare and correctional institutions, inspects state hospitals, jails, and lockups, and has charge of the examination and care of mental patients. Another section of this department is the division of social welfare, which includes public assistance and welfare services (old age assistance, aid to the blind, aid to dependent children, relief, and child welfare), the medical service—which administers the state sanatorium and works with tuberculosis patients in the local areas, and the crippled children's bureau.

The department of labor and industry includes the division of accident prevention which supervises the conditions of industrial employment and the division of women and children which is responsible for the administration of industrial sanitation laws.

The state university, in addition to educating public health workers and doing research in the field, maintains a hospital (legally known as the Minnesota General Hospital) which provides care for indigent patients on a statewide basis and a

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<sup>9</sup>Dr. Liedloff: "The FSA doesn't get to first base. There aren't any low-income farmers in Blue Earth County—we don't have indigent farmers around here, that's in the northern part of the state."

<sup>10</sup>As a means of decentralizing the work of the department, district units are gradually being established in each of the ten administrative areas into which the state has been divided for health purposes. Four units are already in operation, one of them (district health unit No. 2) located in Mankato. The unit serves a district of twelve counties, and is staffed by a public health physician who serves as director, a sanitary engineer, a public health nurse, and a clerk.

laboratory for the use of the state livestock sanitary board and for administering the mastitis control program.

In addition, the state maintains twelve independent examining boards to cover the fields of optometry, osteopathy, veterinary medicine, dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, chiropractic, chiropody, basic sciences, and to supervise beauticians and barbers. The water pollution control commission deals with pollution problems throughout the state; and the Mankato State Teachers College employs two public health nurses.

#### Local Government

Any attempt to describe the administrative organization of local government for public health runs into the problem of discrepancies between law and practice and also differences in practice among units of local government. For example, only fourteen of the twenty-three townships have complied with the requirement that they appoint medical health officers—a requirement found in Chapter 145 of Minnesota Statutes.<sup>11</sup> Both discrepancies and varieties are noted in the following review of local government organization for public health work.

The County. The statutory provision reads: "Two members of every county board, chosen by it yearly at its annual meeting, and one resident physician elected at the same time, shall constitute the county board of health, with jurisdiction over all unorganized towns therein, and with such other powers and duties in reference to the public health as the state board shall prescribe."<sup>12</sup>

Blue Earth County has long complied with this provision, and has also taken advantage of statutory authorization to employ two public health nurses. Both nurses are appointed by the county board of commissioners (from a register maintained by the state board of health) for an indefinite term; they function under the supervision of a county nursing committee and in cooperation with the Blue Earth Public Health Association.

All other county services relating to public health fall under the jurisdiction of the welfare board. The welfare board acts in two capacities: first, entirely as a county organization for the disbursement of local relief funds; and second, as an agency for the administration of county, state, and federal funds which have been designated for aid to dependent children, the blind, and the aged under the Social Security program.

Towns. "Every town board shall be a board of health, and shall have jurisdiction over every village within its boundaries wherein no organized board of health exists. . . . If no member of a town board is a physician, it shall appoint a health officer for the town."<sup>13</sup>

In practice, the town is one of the weak links in local organization for health work. Of the county's twenty-three towns, only fourteen have appointed a medical

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<sup>11</sup>Dr. Liedloff's comment at this point is striking evidence of the casual regard which local officials have toward legal requirements: "Didn't know that was a requirement. In the case of contagious diseases, they employ the doctor who has been caring for the patient, so it is taken care of."

<sup>12</sup>Except where noted, statutory requirements have been drawn from Chapter 145, Minnesota Statutes, 1945.

<sup>13</sup>Where no physician is appointed, the chairman of the town board is considered to be the health officer.

health officer; and these, like all local health officers, serve on a part-time basis. Nine towns, therefore, are without qualified medical assistance for public health work.<sup>14</sup>

None of the towns has taken advantage of a statutory authorization to employ public health nurses.

Villages and Cities. "Every village may, and every city shall, provide by ordinance for the establishment of a local board of health therefor. At least one member of every local board shall be a physician who shall be the local health officer and executive of the board." Both cities and all seven villages in the county have complied with these provisions, though with several variations.

In both cities, the medical health officer is given the official title of medical director. Duties remain the same in the case of all health officers, but there are differences in salaries and in the amount of time their work requires. During 1945, for example, Mankato paid its health director \$770; Lake Crystal, \$50; Mapleton, \$25; and Vernon Center, nothing. Vernon Center, by way of explanation, reported no cases of communicable disease during 1945 for which it could incur expense; furthermore, lacking a resident physician, the village had named for its own officer the medical health officer of the village of Amboy, "and he hasn't charged us for whatever help we've needed."

Other differences occur with respect to the make-up of health boards and their place in the municipal organization. Village boards uniformly consist of the village council, together with the medical health officer in case the latter is not a councilman. In Mankato, under the commission plan of government, health administration comes under the mayor's jurisdiction; and the health board is composed of the mayor as chairman, the health officer, and the city clerk.

Mankato is the only municipality in the county that provides hospital and nursing care. It employs one nurse, who devotes her time exclusively to the detention hospital for contagious diseases.

School Districts. The only statutory provision relating to school health organization is that authorizing the employment of public health nurses. Mankato is the only school district that has taken advantage of this provision.

#### A Functional View of Public Health in the County

##### Reporting Vital Statistics

There is a basic fault in the present system of reporting vital statistics, despite the seeming clarity of legal and administrative arrangements. Minnesota laws place the responsibility for collecting and assembling vital statistics on the state board of health, designating the board's secretary as state registrar and vesting in him the power to appoint local recorders in each town, village, and city. The latter are in almost every instance the health officers of local units, and they are not particularly enriched by the fee of twenty-five cents they receive for each birth

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<sup>14</sup>Dr. Liedloff: "Is there any need of them?" The statement should not be read out of context. Dr. Liedloff had earlier pointed out that the town discharges its responsibility for contagious diseases by designating the attending physician in each case to serve as town health officer. His barb in this instance was directed principally at any inference that the role of the town in public health administration should be expanded beyond what it was required (in his judgment) to play.



and death certificate filed with the state registrar. Certificates must be sent to the state registrar at monthly intervals; at the close of each year, the state returns a certified copy to the clerk of the district court to be filed with his other records.

The system's weak link is the reporting of communicable diseases, particularly those of a less serious nature. There are no fees involved, and only cases requiring medical attention are reported. Arrangements are especially haphazard in the rural areas, where medical health officers may or may not have been appointed and where working relationships of the most informal sort are struck between practicing physicians and local health boards.

On this precarious system, the United States Census Bureau must base its own reports.

#### Control of Communicable Diseases

Towns, Villages, and Cities. The only services provided by towns, villages, and cities in the control of communicable diseases are quarantine regulation and the enforcement of whatever ordinances they or the state board of health might enact to cope with epidemic or emergency conditions. Health officers are responsible for imposing quarantine (but only in those cases reported to them by local physicians or by public health nurses) and for giving general advice and assistance in public health matters.

During 1945, only two of the county's twenty-three towns (LeRay and Jamestown) claimed reimbursements from the county for quarantine expenditures. Villages are equally inert.

There is a marked difference in the amount of work done by the two city health officers, which is reflected in the sizable difference in their salaries. Dr. Kemp, health commissioner for Mankato, reported that during 1945 he had issued fifty-five orders for quarantine, and had not "passed a week without being called upon in some way for advice or assistance, with the volume of work more than doubling during the polio season."

School Districts. Teachers in all schools of the county are responsible in a general way for the detection, reporting, and exclusion of pupils infected with communicable diseases. In addition, all districts cooperate in staging annual tuberculin-testing programs.

The Mankato district, however, is the only school unit which provides a nursing staff to carry on its own programs of prevention and control. Its two nurses collaborate with local physicians in conducting immunization campaigns and make regular health inspections of pupils, excluding them from school when advisable and following up those cases with home visits.

The County. Dr. Liedloff finds little to do as county health officer. Most of his communicable disease control work consists of advice given informally and at any time; his income from the county seldom amounts to more than occasional reimbursements for traveling expenses. Quarantine regulation is left to town and municipal officers.

The county nursing staff bears the brunt of the control and prevention program, being responsible generally for the entire population of the county. The nurses attempt to make regular inspections of pupils in all parochial and public schools of the county, with the exception of the public schools in Mankato. In addition, they are on call to investigate, visit, and follow up any case of communicable disease

that may occur within the county. The highlight of the year's program is the county-wide immunization campaign, in which are enlisted the services of nurses, physicians, and the members of the Blue Earth County Public Health Association.

Work with tuberculosis receives special emphasis. One of the two nurses devotes almost her full time to this phase of the county's communicable disease control program; and during part of the year, she is assisted by the field nurse of the Southwestern Sanatorium.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, little or no attention is given to the control or prevention of venereal disease.<sup>16</sup>

The State. Preventive and control measures similar to those taken by the Mankato school district are carried on by the two nurses attached to the staff of the Mankato State Teachers College. Their work includes both tuberculin testing and immunization campaigns.

The staff of district health unit No. 2 helps control communicable diseases by advising local health officers, public health nurses, and physicians, and by obtaining needed assistance from the state department of health. The unit also acts as a clearinghouse for reports on state and local health activity. Staff members of the unit do not themselves carry on action programs in the community; for example, they do not conduct or make actual arrangements for local immunization campaigns. However, the staff nurse especially is active in stimulating local units to sponsor such campaigns and to improve their communicable disease control programs generally.

The work of communicable disease control at the state level has been assigned to the division of preventable diseases in the department of health. The division operates both at its home office on the campus of the University of Minnesota and in the field; and its functions can be generally summarized as follows:

1. Reporting communicable diseases and handling morbidity records: The division is in charge of assembling and publishing vital statistics reported by local registrars.

2. Epidemiological investigations in the field: The division employs a staff of trained epidemiologists to make field surveys of communicable diseases, to investigate individual cases, and to make inquiry into the source and spread of contagion. One epidemiologist works entirely with tuberculosis, while two others are assigned to venereal diseases. One of the latter is paid from state and the other from federal funds, although both are administratively responsible to the division. Additional staff is made available to investigate all known or suspected cases of typhoid fever, epidemic poliomyelitis, encephalitis, and meningitis, and to assist in combating any unusual outbreak of other diseases.

3. Maintaining laboratories: Free analyses are made of specimens submitted by private physicians and local health units.

4. Free distribution of drugs and vaccines: During the fiscal year 1945-46 the division distributed \$100.45 worth of drugs and vaccines to doctors, hospitals, and schools in Blue Earth County.

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<sup>15</sup>This is operated on a district (11-county) basis.

<sup>16</sup>Dr. Liedloff: "We don't do much on this because it is taken care of by visitors from the state health department and by private physicians."

5. Educational service: In addition to distributing literature on the subject of communicable diseases, the department encourages schools and local health units to sponsor classes and discussion meetings in which its staff members frequently take part.

6. Regulation and enforcement: The division exercises the authority vested in the board of health to make and enforce whatever regulations it considers necessary to control the spread of specific diseases.

The Federal Government. Section 311 of the Public Health Service Act (Public Law 410 of the 78th Congress) places the control of communicable diseases on a cooperative basis: "The Surgeon General is authorized to accept from state and local authorities any assistance in the enforcement of quarantine regulations made pursuant to this Act which such authorities may be able and willing to provide. The Surgeon General shall also assist states and their political subdivisions in the prevention and the suppression of communicable diseases, shall cooperate with and aid state and local authorities in the enforcement of their quarantine and other local health regulations. . . . and shall advise the several states on matters relating to the preservation and improvement of the public health."

A later section (361) extends the control of the surgeon general to all persons moving or about to move interstate, and even to those who constitute "a probable source of infection to individuals who, while infected with such disease in a communicable state, will be moving from one state to another." Despite this blanket grant of authority, the United States Public Health Service has refrained from direct dealings with citizens locally, and acts upon the community only through state programs which it promotes and helps to support.

Federal grants available for work with communicable diseases fall under three headings: venereal disease control; tuberculosis control; and general health. The purpose of the first two grants is evident; the third was set up "to assist, through grants and . . . otherwise . . . states, counties, health districts, and other political subdivisions of the states in establishing and maintaining adequate public health services, including grants for demonstrations and for the training of personnel for state and local health work."

The actual assignment of these funds is made at the discretion of the state department of health in accordance with its own program and needs, but also subject to the approval of the United States Public Health Service.

The Control of Communicable Animal Disease. The foregoing section has considered only the control of communicable disease among humans. Local boards of health are also required by law to assist the state livestock sanitary board in the control of communicable disease among domestic animals: "Every person who knows, or has reason to suspect, that a contagious disease exists in any domestic animal shall immediately notify the local board of health." (Minnesota Statutes, 1941, Ch. 35.) The local board, in turn, is supposed to forward the information to the state livestock sanitary board, and then to await the latter's approval to dispose of the animal or to take other action.

In actual practice, local boards play almost no part in the animal disease control program. Evidence is found in the county health officer's statement that local boards within Blue Earth County have no contact with the sanitary board. His statement, in turn, is borne out by the county auditor's records, which show that the livestock sanitary board has not made indemnity payments (to owners of slaughtered animals) through the county for the past fifteen years.



This does not mean, however, that the livestock sanitary board lacks the means of carrying out its local control program. A local veterinarian has claimed that a better reporting and control program exists for animal health than for human health. This has been made possible by the board's success in obtaining the cooperation of practicing veterinarians throughout the state, and by its system of appointing several veterinarians in each community to act as its representatives. Quarantine notices are posted by private veterinarians rather than by public officials.<sup>17</sup> Since their role has been taken over by private veterinarians, it is not surprising that local boards of health seldom know about animal disease within their jurisdictions until the periodic report arrives from the state board.

The close relationship existing between human and animal health is recognized in the cooperative measures taken by the state department of health and the livestock sanitary board, ever since the latter was dissociated from the department and set up as an independent agency. The department reports to the board all cases of infections traceable to animals, particularly undulant fever. A second instance of cooperation occurs in the case of rabies. All local health officers and the executive officer of the livestock sanitary board are responsible for the investigation of complaints of rabies and for issuing proclamations when cases of rabies are found in any given area.

#### Environmental Sanitation

Abatement of Nuisances and General Enforcement. Section 145.22, Minnesota Statutes, 1945, clearly assigns to local health boards the responsibility for taking the initiative in the abatement of nuisances: "When any nuisance, source of filth, or cause of sickness is found on any property, the health officer of the city, village, or town shall order the owner or occupant thereof to remove the same, at his expense."

The law also seems clear enough in making local boards responsible to the state board of health for the abatement of nuisances and for general enforcement. Section 144.05 reads: "The state board of health shall exercise general supervision over all health officers and boards." Section 145.03 states that "all local boards of health and health officers . . . under the general supervision of the state board . . . shall cause all laws and regulations relating to the public health to be obeyed and enforced"; and it goes on to outline the procedure under which the state board of health is to take action against delinquent health officials.

The restraint shown by the state board of health in interpreting these provisions is a bow to local self-government. But it has also left the community a bit confused about where responsibility lies, and without a clear-cut remedy in case local boards fail to act. It is the board's interpretation that "The statutes make it a general duty of the Board and its Executive Officer to see that all health laws and regulations are obeyed, but the actual enforcement of these laws is the special duty and responsibility of the local boards of health, the health officers of villages and cities, and the chairman of town boards of health."<sup>18</sup>

The following incident is an interesting commentary on the governmental and inter-governmental approach favored by this interpretation: In Mankato, a bowling league complained to the city health officer about unsanitary rest-room facilities which the

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<sup>17</sup>Veterinarians also take part in the testing drives conducted periodically in each of the counties by the state livestock sanitary board, in cooperation with the Bureau of Animal Industry (United States Department of Agriculture).

<sup>18</sup>Minnesota State Board of Health, Minnesota State Health Laws and Regulations (July 1, 1944), p. 5.

proprietor of the alleys refused to correct. No action was taken, and the league appealed to the state department of health. The department's reply was that enforcement was a local responsibility; and the appeal was returned without action to the city health officer.<sup>19</sup>

In general, local health boards and officers in Blue Earth County have been lax about enforcement. This looseness is due chiefly to two factors: first, the ticklish position of the local health officer vis-à-vis members of the community against whom he is supposed to act (who may be friends, neighbors, or whatever, and always vocal), and second, the hesitancy with which the state exercises its statutory right of supervision.

The federal government does not enter into the work of general enforcement at the local level.

Health, Sanitary, and Safety Inspection of Foods, Facilities, and Institutions. Inspectional activity is concentrated at the state level; but there is enough carried on by the city and federal governments to make the total inspectional system a highly complicated one. The situation is the more complicated because of the broad range of things to be inspected, and the frequent variation in standards under which inspections are made.

The following paragraphs outline the inspectional services provided by the different levels, units, and agencies of government, and give some indication of the range of these services within Blue Earth County.

The county, towns, villages, and school districts are not concerned with inspections of foods, eating places, or other establishments, with one exception. Local health officers are required by law (Section 642.09, Minnesota Statutes, 1945) to inspect the sanitary conditions of all jails and lockups within their jurisdictions once each year, and are to be paid a (state) fee of \$2 for each inspection made. Actually, the law seems to be a dead letter. The sheriff reports that the county health officer sees no reason for carrying out inspections when both state and federal authorities are making periodic investigations of their own. Except for Mankato the situation is the same among other local units in the county.

Mankato is the only local unit that makes an attempt to investigate conditions of food processing and sale. The city has combined with North Mankato (its sister city across the river but in a different county) in employing a full-time milk inspector to make quarterly inspections of dairies, dairy farms, and retail milk establishments.

It is a matter of some local pride and an ironic twist in the expected pattern of intergovernmental relations that the Mankato milk inspector makes his inspections of dairies and dairy farms according to the United States Public Health Service Code rather than under the state's own milk pasteurization law. The code is more stringent than the 1945 Minnesota statute, which is separately enforced by the dairy and food division of the state department of agriculture.

Five sixths of the milk inspector's salary is paid by the city of Mankato, and one sixth by the city of North Mankato—roughly in proportion to their populations. Mankato covers the cost of the inspector's laboratory.

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<sup>19</sup>Dr. Liedloff: "I have talked with the mayor and with the city health officer, and they are going to have a showdown on this. It hasn't been corrected before because the proprietor has been unable to get materials. But when the place is closed down, see how fast he'll get them."

The state provides inspectional services through district health unit No. 2, the department of health, the department of agriculture, dairy, and food, and the department of social security.

The sanitary engineer of district health unit No. 2 attempts annually to investigate all municipal and school water supplies, sewage systems, facilities for the disposal of industrial waste, and bathing beaches which come under his jurisdiction. He is also responsible for making a preliminary examination of municipal or industrial plans for new water supply or waste disposal systems, and he stands ready upon request to investigate private water supplies or to advise on their construction. In order to secure uniformity in standards, the engineer is constantly at work persuading local units to incorporate the Minnesota plumbing code into their own regulations. The persuasive approach, it might be added, is the one he uses in every phase of his work.

The division of administration of the department of health has general charge of enforcing the state licensing laws relating to plumbers and to embalmers and funeral directors. All funeral directors in Blue Earth County are licensed by the division. In addition to issuing licenses, the division's inspectors supervise major plumbing installations throughout the state and conduct surveys of plumbing facilities in all public buildings.

The division of hotel and resort inspection of the department of health is responsible for administering the state hotel and restaurant inspection and licensing laws. In 1946, the division reported that 170 places of business in Blue Earth County were licensed under its sanitation and safety supervision.

The division of dairy and food inspection of the department of agriculture, dairy, and food enforces the Minnesota dairy and food act and all other laws designed to prevent fraud and deception in the manufacture and sale of food. Its staff of eighteen inspectors covers every community in the state.

In 1946, the department's inspector for the seven-county area including Blue Earth County and six others reported that there were 202 establishments in Blue Earth County which he inspected regularly. His added comment tells a bit more about the facts of intergovernmental life: "In addition to these establishments there are a number of others, such as flour mills, egg and poultry dressing plants, egg drying plants, etc., which as food establishments come under the inspection of the Dairy and Food Division, but because of some other inspection covering them, such as federal inspections, do not ordinarily get as much attention in my work as those listed, unless a complaint brings a special inspection to them."

The division of canning and beverage inspection of the department of agriculture, dairy, and food employs one inspector, with headquarters in St. Paul, to check on sanitary conditions in bottling plants and breweries throughout the state. In addition, the chief bacteriologist makes the rounds of all canning factories during the summer season. During 1945, there were six bottling plants and one canning company licensed by the division within Blue Earth County, all of them located in Mankato.

In the division of marketing of the department of agriculture, dairy, and food, the egg and poultry section employs three inspectors to check on egg-breaking plants in the state (one in Blue Earth County) for sanitation, and to guard against the distribution of inedible eggs. They also check all egg dealers (105 in Blue Earth County) to see that they are licensed and operating within the provisions of the egg law.

The cold storage section of the same division employs one inspector, with headquarters in the Twin Cities, to check on sanitation and food preservation in frozen food locker plants scattered throughout the state (eleven in Blue Earth County).



Since most locker plants in the rural areas are operated by local creameries, there has been a move recently to shift their inspection to the dairy and food division, which covers the same establishments. There is no cooperative arrangement between them.

The division of accident prevention of the department of labor and industry employs a large number of safety inspectors who check on safety precautions, heating, lighting, ventilation, drinking water, and washroom facilities in all places of employment throughout the state. The breadth of their assignment (the protection of health, limbs, and lives of workers) gives them practically unlimited inspectional authority. The division frequently calls upon the department of health to investigate particular cases of industrial hazards, and to advise remedial action. The county sheriff reports that safety inspectors from the division make annual checks of the county jail, independently of other state and federal inspections.

The division of women and children of the department of labor and industry made thirty-nine routine inspections in Mankato during the fiscal year 1946. These inspections were to enforce the various labor laws for which the division is responsible including the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and the Minnesota 54-hour law. In addition to making routine inspections, the division reported that it was called upon to handle "considerable" correspondence originating in Blue Earth County, including inquiries and complaints from employers, employees, governmental agencies, and the general public. (All the complaints proved unfounded.) The division employs a staff of twelve investigators. Six are paid from state and six from federal funds, but all are administratively responsible to the division.

The division of public institutions of the department of social security employs a jail and lockup inspector whose headquarters are at the St. Paul office. His inspections are made from the standpoint of safety and health of the inmates, and are supposed to lead to improvements in jail facilities where necessary. Complete coverage is given to lockups in Blue Earth County—again independently of other state and federal inspections.

An attempt was made to get data for a complete picture of the inspectional and enforcement activities of the federal government comparable to the one just drawn for state and local governments, but the attempt failed. The information was just not available.

Conceivably, there is a way of surmounting the difficulty—i.e., checking all agency payrolls and compiling from them a list of inspectional personnel. Since this could not be done, the author simply tried to accumulate such information as he could, patchwork style, and to present whatever inspectional services he uncovered as at least illustrative of federal activity.

The Food and Drug Administration is responsible for the enforcement of five acts: the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act; the Tea Act; the Import Milk Act; the Caustic Poison Act; and the Filled Milk Act. Its staff of inspectors ranges the country, inspecting plants where food, drugs, and cosmetics are processed or manufactured, and analyzing products to detect adulteration or misbranding. Inspectors of the administration appear regularly in the Blue Earth County area; but the regional office was unable to furnish statistical reports on their personnel or local activity. (The proprietors of a local confectionery say "they"—referring indiscriminately to local, state, and federal food inspectors—are "always around.")

The United States Public Health Service supervises the manufacture and sale, in interstate commerce, of biologics and other medicines used in the prevention and treatment of disease. It does so by licensing commercial firms, making laboratory

tests of their products, and inspecting their manufacturing plants. No information is available as to the local activity of its inspectors.

The Children's Bureau carries on child-labor inspections through its own staff and, under cooperative arrangements, through the inspectional staff of the Wage and Hour Division of the United States Department of Labor. The bureau's staff investigates establishments not covered by the wage and hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.<sup>20</sup>

The United States marshal's office in St. Paul employs a jail inspector to make periodic investigations of jails used to house federal prisoners. The Blue Earth County jail is included in his tour of inspections.

Water Supply, Garbage Removal, and Sewage Disposal. All but one of the cities in the county have their own municipal water systems. (See the tabulation below.) Garbage and sewage disposal, however, is quite a different matter. Only Mankato maintains a (free) garbage collection and disposal system.<sup>21</sup> The city of Lake Crystal—as well as each of the seven villages—entrusts garbage disposal entirely to the discretion of the individual householder. All sewage from the city of Mankato is piped in its raw state directly into the Minnesota River. Sewage from Lake Crystal flows into Lake Lilly with the overflow passing into Minneopa Creek, thence to the Minnesota River where it combines with the sewage from Mankato and North Mankato. Disposal for the rest of the county's inhabitants is an individual problem.

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Water System</u>	<u>Sewage</u>	<u>Garbage</u>
Mankato.....	Well supply	Piping to river, no treatment	Free collection and incineration
Lake Crystal.....	Well supply	Piping, Imhoff tank, open sludge bed	None
Amboy.....	Well supply	Piping, Imhoff tank, open sludge bed	None
Eagle Lake.....	None	None	None
Good Thunder.....	Well supply	Piping, no treatment	None
Mapleton.....	Well supply	Piping, Imhoff tank, open sludge bed	None
Madison Lake.....	Well supply	None	None
St. Clair.....	Well supply	None	None
Vernon Center....	Well supply	None	None

The state enters the picture principally through the work of its division of sanitation in the department of health. The activity of this division is largely investigatory and advisory and is directed principally toward helping local communities with environmental problems affecting public health. Where there are established district health units, as in Blue Earth County, the division works chiefly through the unit's sanitary engineer.

For the purposes of his and the division's work, sanitation has been defined to include the provision of safe and adequate water and milk supplies; disposal of

<sup>20</sup>It has not been determined whether the inspectional work of the bureau is carried on separately, or cooperatively with the state division of women and children (see above).

<sup>21</sup>Dr. Liedloff: "Would feel awfully bad if the garbage and disposal system weren't free. We have a more complete collection and as a result, have very few flies. There should be mention of the fine incineration—very proud of it." (He is right on all counts.)

sewage and industrial wastes; prevention of stream and lake pollution; and maintenance of sanitary conditions at public bathing places. Plans for public water supplies, sewage disposal systems, and milk pasteurization plants must be submitted for examination and approval of their sanitary features before construction can get under way. A preliminary check is usually made by the district engineer, but final approval is given by the division on the basis of its own study, field surveys, and laboratory reports.

Before June 1, 1945, the state board of health was also charged with the responsibility for administering and enforcing all laws relating to the pollution of state waters. On that date, its duties were transferred to the water pollution control commission, an independent agency of the state created to meet growing complaints against liberties taken by industrial plants and municipalities in their disposal of wastes. The commission was given broad regulatory powers, but its financial wings were immediately clipped: its budgetary allowance for its first year of operation amounted to less than one fifth of what it had asked for.

The federal government enters into the fields of sanitation and water supply only incidentally (as in connection with the milk sanitation codes of the United States Department of Agriculture);<sup>22</sup> informally (as through the county agent, who advises farmers on the location of wells, privies, etc.);<sup>23</sup> or in an advisory and educational capacity (as through the consultants employed by the United States Public Health Service).

Housing. Although poor housing conditions may be found to exist in individual instances throughout the county, the present housing problem is not one of slum conditions. Rather, it is the same shortage of housing facilities that is being experienced throughout the country. For example, only 306 new houses were constructed in Mankato during the seven-year period starting with 1939.

The only ventures into public housing within Blue Earth County have come as a result of the war emergency. Early in World War II, an unsuccessful appeal was presented jointly by the city of Mankato and the Chamber of Commerce to the federal government for permission and priorities to go ahead with a limited emergency housing program. Later, the city managed to erect ten cabins at its trailer and tourist park, and is now operating them on a rental basis.

After the war, the federal government set up twenty-one barrack-type housing units on one of the city's athletic fields, to relieve the shortage caused by increased numbers of college students with families. The city's part in the project was to rent the land to the federal government, to provide utility service (connections and piping to be supplied by the federal government), and to collect monthly rental charges. The income from rent, minus the charges for services provided by the city, is turned over to the federal government.

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<sup>22</sup>Dr. Liedloff: "The federal government does come in—which is a rotten thing. The federal government does not know what a well is. They also request the state board of health to investigate the places where passenger trains get their drinking water."

<sup>23</sup>The advisory services of the county agent are rapidly being formalized. During March 1946, five meetings were scheduled at which both the agent and the home demonstration leader addressed rural audiences on the subject of how to install bathrooms and water systems in farm houses.



## Personal Hygiene and Care

Maternal and Infant Care. Towns, villages, cities, and schools do not concern themselves with the care of mothers and infants.<sup>24</sup> The county nursing staff reports that it is able to do "too little" about maternity and infant care because of its concentration on school hygiene and communicable disease control. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1946, the nurses were able to visit only a handful of the expectant mothers in the county, and to do but little more in postnatal care. A larger group was reached by using the new health center for educational activities, including exhibits and classes in maternity hygiene. The county staff does not accept financial aid from state or federal governments for maternal and infant health purposes.<sup>25</sup>

On the state level the nurses at the Mankato State Teachers College do not provide actual maternity and infant care, but they do cooperate with personnel from the state department of health in conducting a class in maternity and child health and in distributing literature on the subject. During the school year 1945-46, there were eighteen meetings of the class, with a total attendance of almost two hundred.

District health unit No. 2's staff nurse attempts<sup>26</sup> to interest local units in providing or expanding their services to mothers and children, and she acts in an advisory capacity to local public health nurses in whatever work they undertake.

State interest in maternity and infant care was stimulated by the federal government in 1922, and the activity of the two governments has been closely interwoven ever since. In that year, the division of child hygiene was created within the state department of health. Its purpose was to carry out a program of education in maternal and child health under the provisions of the Sheppard-Towner Act and in cooperation with the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor.

Under present arrangements (Chapter 144.06, Minnesota Statutes, 1945), the program is intended to "provide instruction and advice to expectant mothers during pregnancy and confinement, and to mothers and their infants after childbirth." From 1922 to 1927, the federal government contributed to the support of the program; but for the next eight years, the state carried on with its own funds.

The passage of the Social Security Act in 1935 renewed federal support and made possible the expansion of state activity. The first step taken under the grants provided by Title V of the act was to promote the development of county public health nursing throughout the state, in the belief that local public health nurses would be the most convenient agents for disseminating information and the most effective in providing maternal and infant care.

Currently, federal funds coming to the state under the regular Title V allotments are used to support a wide range of activity on the part of the state department of health. On the other hand, the large grants made under the Emergency Maternity and Infant Care program are used almost exclusively for the purposes for which they are designated—prenatal care, delivery and postnatal care for GI wives, and medical, hospital, and nursing care for their infants during the first year of life.

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<sup>24</sup>Dr. Liedloff: "Don't know why 'schools' should care for mothers and infants. They are well taken care of by private physicians and parents. If indigent, the cost is paid by the welfare board."

<sup>25</sup>Dr. Liedloff: "Doesn't need it."

<sup>26</sup>Dr. Liedloff: "The word 'attempts' should be left out. I know she does!"

Neither the state division nor the federal bureau works directly with mothers or infants. The state for a time employed a staff of two or three nurses who conducted classes in the basic principles of maternity and infant care, some of them in conjunction with health courses offered in the state teachers colleges. The Children's Bureau retains a staff of specialists (pediatricians, orthopedic surgeons, nutritionists, etc.) who make suggestions in regard to the program of the state division, advise on what is being done in other states, and attempt to achieve uniformity of practice among the various state agencies.

Some friction has arisen between administrators of the state division and the United States Children's Bureau over program management. By reason of its administration of federal grants, the bureau reserves the right to approve or disapprove of state plans for the use of federal moneys. In recent years, the bureau has been placing its emphasis on clinics and intensive educational projects. State officials, on the other hand, point to the fact that Minnesota has one of the lowest infant death rates in the nation, and claim that it is due to the manner in which the state's doctors and lay people have already been trained. An intensive program such as that outlined by the bureau would tend, they feel, to relax the vigilance of individual doctors and, in the end, would defeat its own purpose. For this reason, the state division has not fully complied with the bureau's program, and has taken budget cuts as a consequence.<sup>27</sup>

Both state and federal agencies have advisory committees to assist them in planning and administering their programs. The division of child hygiene works together with a committee appointed by the state medical society, while the United States Children's Bureau cooperates with a similar committee at the national level.

Pre-School Health. The nursing staffs of the county and of the Mankato school district are alone in providing pre-school health service, and even they are able to give only a limited amount of attention to the care of children under school age. Their activity consists usually of a few visits, several talks to interested groups, the sponsoring of occasional pre-school clinics, and scattered immunizations.

None of the other units or agencies of government makes special provisions for pre-school health, although the educational and promotional programs carried on by the division of child hygiene and the United States Children's Bureau give some coverage to this aspect of public health.

School Health. Towns, villages, and cities are not engaged in school health programs. All schools, with the exception of the public schools of the Mankato district, are served by the county nursing staff. By agreement, one of the two nurses works with the rural schools, while the other covers those in the urban areas. It is expected, however, that teachers will make day-to-day checks on the health of their pupils, and will bring cases of illness or suspected illness to the attention of the county nurses.<sup>28</sup> Other services under the heading of school health include the penny-milk and school-lunch projects of recent years.

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<sup>27</sup>This information was supplied in a series of interviews with Dr. Chesley, head of the state department of health, and his assistant, Dr. Barr (July 1946). Note Dr. Liedloff's corroborating remarks: "Dr. Chesley has refused grants in aid for maternal and child welfare because we don't need it. Ninety-six per cent of the children are born in hospitals and have their own private physician."

<sup>28</sup>Dr. Liedloff: "Parents look after the needs of their children pretty well around here. You would be surprised at the number who are taken in for regular check-ups."

The two nurses of the Mankato school district are concerned primarily, of course, with school health. It should be remembered that the jurisdiction of the nurses includes all public elementary (4) and secondary (1) schools in the Mankato district—with a total enrollment of approximately 2500 students. Their work differs from that of the county nurses in that they are also responsible for the enforcement of truancy regulations.

The two nurses of the Mankato State Teachers College are also primarily concerned with the health of the children enrolled in schools. The staff nurse of the district health unit gives general supervision to the work of the public health nurses, and stands ready to advise or to assist whenever called upon. The state department of health makes no direct contribution to the school health program. Its part consists in promoting the establishment of school nursing services, and in facilitating the work already being carried out.

The federal government's Office of Education works with the United States Children's Bureau and with the state department of education in recommending minimum standards of school attendance and conditions of child labor; and with the United States Department of Agriculture and the state department of education in promoting school-lunch and penny-milk programs. The major contribution of the federal government comes, of course, in the form of grants from the United States Public Health Service for the support of state activity.

Care of Crippled and Dependent Children. Towns, villages, cities, and school districts other than that of Mankato do not make special provisions for the care of crippled and needy children. The nursing staffs of the Mankato school district, the county, and the Mankato State Teachers College are active in caring for crippled children coming under their jurisdictions. None of the local health units receives financial support from either the state or the federal government for activity along these lines.

The picture is not complete, however, without including the health services provided under the welfare systems—another illustration of the way in which health and related functions blend into one another.

Under the Social Security Act, staff and money have been made available for the care of crippled children. Title V, Part 2, of the act makes the United States Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor responsible for administering an annual appropriation designed to enable "each state to extend and improve (especially in rural areas and in areas suffering from severe economic distress), as far as practicable under the conditions in such state, services for locating crippled children and for providing medical, surgical, corrective, and other services and care, and facilities for diagnosis, hospitalization, and after-care, for children who are crippled or who are suffering from conditions which lead to crippling."

At the state level, this program is administered by the bureau for crippled children of the division of social welfare (department of social security). The bureau operates according to plans approved by the United States Children's Bureau, and is supported entirely by federal funds. It provides hospitalization for crippled children in public (Gillette State Hospital, St. Paul) and private hospitals; conducts annual field clinics for crippled children in sixteen different sections of the state, including one at Mankato; provides a staff of eight field nurses and four medical social workers; and cooperates closely with the division of vocational rehabilitation of the state department of education in assisting handicapped children. Close contact is also maintained with the state department of health, which reports all cases of polio to the bureau. Local health and welfare staffs cooperate in this



program by assisting the bureau's field nurses in setting up crippled children clinics, and by referring cases of crippled children coming to their attention.

General health care for homeless, dependent, and neglected children is provided for under Part 3, Title V, of the Social Security Act, which makes somewhat different administrative arrangements from those established under Part 2. The United States Children's Bureau continues as the responsible agency at the federal level. In addition to allocating grants-in-aid, the bureau makes available to the states the advisory services of pediatricians, orthopedic surgeons, nutritionists, specialists in foster care, group work, and juvenile delinquency, and regional consultants in the fields of medicine, public health, nursing, medical sociology, and child welfare.

At the state level, the program is in charge of the bureau of child welfare (division of social welfare), which employs four consultants to do detailed case work and to serve county welfare boards in an advisory capacity.

At the county level, the child welfare program merges into the social welfare system, along with aid to dependent children and poor relief. The significance of these assistance programs to the public health of the community is often lost in the traditional classification of governmental activities; and as a result, the role of government—and of local government in particular—in the field of public health is grossly underestimated.

Adult Hygiene and General Nursing Service. Activity in this field is confined to those units employing public health nurses (county, Mankato school district, and the state through its local teachers college) and is customarily divided into three groups of services. Adult hygiene refers principally to service extended to staff members and employees of educational institutions (particularly the Mankato State Teachers College), although it may also cover visits made to adult patients in the community. Annual activity reports for the year 1945-46 show that less than 1 per cent of the total time of school nurses was dedicated to adult hygiene. County nurses were not involved. Morbidity services, the second group, includes the care and treatment of general illness, but not of communicable disease. They occupy a somewhat greater but still negligible proportion of the time of county and Mankato school nurses, and approximately 10 per cent of the working time of the college nurses. Social service covers a variety of situations, ranging from the enforcement of truancy regulations by Mankato school nurses, to the visiting by all nurses of homes giving evidence of family or other social maladjustment. Service of this type requires a negligible amount of time compared to the work involved with communicable diseases, school health, and general administration.

Hospitals. There are two private hospitals (Catholic and Lutheran) in the county, both located in Mankato. Adjacent to the two private hospitals is a detention hospital for contagious diseases, maintained by the city of Mankato to accommodate a maximum of twenty patients. In order to ensure against overcrowding, the hospital does not admit patients who are not city residents.

There are no other hospital facilities within the county. However, the board of county commissioners recently made it possible for residents with tuberculosis to get expert care and treatment at a nominal cost by joining the southwestern sanatorium district. The district comprises eleven counties in addition to Blue Earth.

Institutional care is also provided for low-income residents under the county's relief and welfare program. During 1945, the county referred patients to thirteen out-of-county hospitals, sanatoria, and state institutions. In the case of the University Hospital in Minneapolis, which exists primarily to serve indigent patients throughout the state, costs are shared equally by the hospital and the county. The latter is required to furnish the patients' traveling expenses.

## Laboratory Service

Following is a list of government laboratories which are regularly used for public health work within the community:

<u>Operating Agency</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Procedure for Submittal</u>
Mankato police department	Mankato	Milk inspection	Through milk inspector
Division of preventable diseases, state department of health	Minneapolis	Detection of communicable diseases	Through district health unit
Division of sanitation, state department of health	Minneapolis	Sanitation analyses (milk, water, sewage, etc.)	Through sanitary engineer of district health unit and individual public health engineers of the division
Division of canning and beverage inspection, department of agriculture, dairy, and food	St. Paul	Canning and beverage analysis	Through individual field inspectors
Division of dairy and food inspection, department of agriculture, dairy, and food	St. Paul	Analysis of food and related products	Through individual field inspectors
State livestock sanitary board	St. Paul	Detection of communicable disease among animals	Through field representative and private veterinarians

## Education

Public health education has a preferred position among governmental activities in public health, except in the case of towns, villages, and cities, which take only an incidental part in this phase of the program.

The educational activity of state district health unit No. 2 is of a somewhat different nature. Although the unit serves as an outlet in the community for literature and other information published by governmental and private research agencies, its main job has been to stimulate governmental bodies to undertake and to improve public health services. Each professional member of the unit's staff makes numerous appearances before governmental agencies and groups of interested citizens to discuss problems of water, sewage, milk, health nursing, etc., with a view to promoting the work in those fields. Nearly all state and federal agencies carry on educational work along with their direct services. Principally concerned, of course, are the state department of health and the United States Public Health Service, whose activities include publishing research findings; reporting on communicable diseases; and distributing general health information through literature, exhibits, movies, and posters—which the county nurses and the Public Health Association willingly distribute in the community.

## Administration

In describing the health work carried on within or for the community, it is easy to underestimate the amounts of time and money required to administer that work. Such expenditures are not so great in towns, villages, and school districts (except the Mankato district), but there are always reports to be filed, the most elaborate being

the permanent public health records which school authorities must keep for each pupil. For each county, Mankato's school district, and the state college, on the other hand, administration looms as a sizable problem. Much of the nurses' time is spent in routine office work—writing letters and reports. The staff of the state district health unit devotes an even greater share of its working time to administrative functions, since such work is expressly made a part of the unit's assignment.

The administrative burden of state and federal health agencies is of course heavier, but need not be described here.

#### The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Public Health

The Blue Earth County Public Health Association, the mainstay of the local public health program, is subdivided into five auxiliary committees, one for each of the county commissioner districts. Each committee has its own officers (including the commissioner for the district *ex officio*) and its own roster of members, including two to four group leaders in every town, village, and city. The work of the association may be summarized as follows: (1) program-planning, for both the nurses and participating members; (2) educational meetings; (3) assistance in actual health work—e.g., conducting home-nursing classes, staging health demonstrations, and making sponges for use in the immunization program; and (4) financial support of the county nursing program.

The American Red Cross, Blue Earth County chapter, consisting of local residents who contribute one dollar or more annually, is organized into the following service division: (1) home service, which has charge of welfare activity; (2) home nursing, which sponsors classes designed as a training program for homemakers and nurses' aides; (3) production, responsible for sewing, knitting, bandages, etc.; (4) water safety, which conducts swimming classes and awards life-saving certificates; (5) first aid; and (6) nutrition, which distributes information on the subject and conducts training programs. Most of the work of these divisions is carried on by volunteer help; and both the staff of district health unit No. 2 and the county nurses have co-operated in the various training programs.

In the case of local emergency (as, for instance, the 1946 tornado), the regular services of the Red Cross are reinforced to include provisions for direct treatment and relief. This is made possible by direct participation of the national organization. Ordinarily, however, the Red Cross does not act as a relief or welfare agency, but refers needy cases to the county board or to private charitable organizations. During World War II, the Red Cross served as a source of information and assistance for servicemen and their families. This wartime activity included providing emergency food and medical care; supplying information about the GI Bill of Rights; and channeling cases for maternity and infant care under the Emergency Maternal and Infant Care program of the federal government. The Red Cross was specifically authorized to carry on this agency function.

The Community Chest gives assistance only in emergencies and in "borderline" cases; i.e., it helps over a hump persons who are not permanent relief cases and who could ordinarily be expected to be self-supporting. Aid may be given for the purchase of eye glasses or for general medical and dental care. The money in these cases is usually turned over to the county nurse, who takes charge of the client. In all cases, there is close communication among the Chest and other welfare agencies, governmental and private.

The Chest's normal budget has been around \$3000 a year for all purposes. In the fiscal year 1945-46 it amounted to \$2200, including funds paid out to support the penny-milk program in Mankato schools. The Chest paid the local share of the milk



subsidy, the remainder being supplied by the federal government and from the penny receipts. In a very few cases, the Chest also paid the student's penny.

Other organizations which regularly contribute to community health work among the needy include the various Catholic orders, the Immanuel Hospital Women's Auxiliary, the Elks, the Kiwanis, the Salvation Army, and the YMCA. These groups step in, for example, to pay for X-rays recommended by the county nurses for needy patients. Members of the Blue Earth County Medical Society assist with the pre-school and school health programs by conducting clinics and immunization campaigns. Members are paid for their work from county and city health funds.

The Farm Security Administration, through its local agent, has been very active but to date unsuccessful in promoting group health plans among farmers of the lower income brackets. According to a representative of Blue Cross, which in 1945 had thirty-one group plans in operation in the city of Mankato alone, nearly 50 per cent of the county's population is covered by some form of hospitalization insurance.<sup>29</sup>

### "The Ties That Bind"

The forces that hold this amalgam of public health activities together are many and varied. At the very core there are the powerfully cohesive bonds of friendship and the community of professional interests which are embodied in the Blue Earth County Public Health Association. Everyone who has a direct part to play in the local health program is a member of the association—and this includes the local representatives of state and federal health agencies (especially the staff of state district health unit No. 2) as well as local health officers and interested members of the medical, dental, and nursing professions.

On the informal side, the association's resources include the power of the professions, the prestige of distinguished citizens, and the immense energy of scores of willing lay workers. On the formal side, the association has a direct tie with governmental powers at both local and state levels, and a key role in setting local public health policy. Its central executive board includes ex officio one of the county commissioners (the other commissioners each sit as board members for their respective districts), the county superintendent of schools, the county health officer, the probate judge, and the city health officer; and state public health officers regularly address and attend the association's annual meetings. The executive board has been so constituted as to fulfill the statutory requirements for a county nursing committee, and in that capacity plans and supervises the work of the county nurses.

The strong common interest in the health of the community that motivates both private and governmental leaders in public health, and makes a reality of the association itself, is also the stuff that is needed for effective intergovernmental cooperation. It also suggests a first principle in the theory of intergovernmental relations: the functional ties among local, state, and federal officials are much stronger than the jurisdictional lines which divide them. The county nurse, for example, has more in common with her counterparts (often her heroes) in the state health department than she has with other officials and employees in the county courthouse—which is another way of pointing out the "guild" factor in intergovernmental relations, its cohesive power varying with the degree to which these functional groups have become professionalized.

This coordinative role of the association and, underlying it, of the medical guild, is supplemented by a network of more formal measures, and as one might expect these are of varied and limited effect.

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<sup>29</sup>Dr. Liedloff: "Fifty per cent is stretching it pretty strong."

Two formal approaches have been used to relate federal and state programs: grants-in-aid and direct measures in the field, the former more frequently than the latter. The United States Public Health Service, the Children's Bureau, and the Social Security Board have delegated most of their actual health work to state and local governments, exercising control and extending aid through a variety of federal grants. On the other hand, the Food and Drug Administration and the Farm Security Administration carry on their own programs in the field and by-pass state and local organizations.

Relations between state and local governments have been clearly provided for by statute. Local health boards are directly responsible to the state board for the enforcement of health laws and regulations, and are required to collaborate with the state livestock sanitary board in matters relating to disease among animals. In practice, these lines of control are not effective,<sup>30</sup> partly because of the strong spirit of independence among local units<sup>31</sup> and partly because of the hands-off policy followed by the state board of health.

It is in the community, the meeting point of the various programs of federal, state, and local governments, that a formal and comprehensive pattern of intergovernmental relations is lacking. True, the state district health unit, supported by federal funds, represents a significant attempt to gear the state department of health more closely into the community by cooperative rather than compulsory methods. The unit has succeeded in decentralizing some of the state's services and in establishing close relations with nursing staffs of the various counties. But it has not been able, nor was it intended, to provide the over-all coordination needed under the present system of community government.

It is also true that there are statutory provisions which might serve to counteract the insularity of local health boards. The first (Chapter 145, Minnesota Statutes, 1945) states that "all local health boards of each county shall cooperate as far as practicable and the state board by written order may require any two or more local boards to act together for the prevention or suppression of epidemic diseases." The second (Chapter 557 of the Laws of Minnesota, 1943) provides that "two or more local government units, by agreement entered into through action of their governmental bodies, may jointly exercise any power common to the contracting bodies." Neither has been called into play, the reasons being the current absence of any severe epidemics or acute health problems in the community and the inertia of local boards of health.

#### SUMMARY

This study of public health in Blue Earth County, while following the functional approach, has ranged freely into adjacent and related areas of administration. As a result a broader-than-usual picture of public health has emerged. But the impression it leaves is a fair one. There is more to the local health program than the activity of a single level or unit might suggest. Its scope is seldom realized: citizens tend to think only in terms of their family doctor or county nurse, and local administrators only of their own assignments.

One cannot, of course, judge the effectiveness or adequacy of public health work merely by counting the agencies involved or the many pages required to describe them.

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<sup>30</sup>Dr. Liedloff: "There is somewhat of a split there. Don't know why it should exist, but it does."

<sup>31</sup>Dr. Liedloff: "Right here you have to remember that local control is the strongest home rule policy. Have city pass an ordinance, with penalties for violation. Then there is no lawsuit."

In spite of administrative bulk, Blue Earth County lacks much in the way of desirable service. One need mention only the rudimentary state of sanitary facilities in the outlying areas, the casual outlook of local health officers, and the limited budget and personnel of local health units. It is important to understand why these inadequacies exist and by what process—judging from the past—they are likely to be corrected. One has first to note local attitudes. The community has held doggedly to a philosophy of home rule, and within that framework of thought continues to rely upon private facilities, stubbornly resists official attempts to enforce health standards, and only reluctantly extends the range of government action.

But the community's reluctance has not held back the tide of big government and centralization in public health—rather it has helped speed it along. For what the community has failed or refused to do has usually been accomplished through other instruments of government, the result being that Blue Earth County is today the scene of activity of a score or more state and federal agencies. Because the field is so rewarding and the range of activities so great, few of these agencies duplicate the efforts of local organizations.

And for all its assertions of pride and independence, the community welcomes much of this added activity. Unpleasant mutterings persist from those who are adversely affected (e.g., the owner of the locker plant who is ordered to improve his facilities) and chronic complaints arise from those who consider state and federal action only in the abstract, yet very few are able to list more than a handful of available services, and certainly not the names or offices of the agents performing them. Still, Blue Earth citizens go about their work with a reassurance that some authority is licensing doctors and inspecting foods.

All this is public health in Blue Earth County—a strange and often inconsistent body of attitudes, a complex of agencies, policies, and services, a picture of a community within a community fighting to preserve its beliefs and its identity, while joining with the larger society of which it is part in a common and pragmatic effort to improve local health conditions.



## CHAPTER 7

# Government and Highways

Complicated as the administration and finance of highways may be, the total picture contrasts sharply with the fragmentation of agricultural and public health activity.

The structure of highway administration is easily described: at the federal level, the Public Roads Administration; for the state, the department of highways; and representing local government, the county, towns, and incorporated places. Simplicity has been assured by the continued emphasis central governments have placed upon grants-in-aid rather than upon direct activity in the local area. As a result, only two administrative agencies descend upon the community from higher levels: construction and maintenance units of the state, and project inspectors from the Public Roads Administration. The final and basic reason for this comparative simplicity lies in the fact that highways, in contrast to agriculture and health, are a single field of government rather than a complex of widely ranging activities.

This is not to argue that integration on anything but a relative scale has been achieved. The mere existence of six different classes of roads in the community and the more or less independent functioning of nearly three dozen highway authorities should be enough to destroy such an illusion. In another place it is recorded how tangled the relationship between federal and state administrations can become.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, highway development stands as one of the hopeful signs that an orderly pattern of community government and intergovernmental relations can be achieved.

### A RESUME OF LOCAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

Figure 10, by showing maps of four representative townships and presenting mileage data for different types of roads, gives both a pictorial and a statistical description of highway administration within the county. It does not include city and village streets which add 100 miles to the total mileage listed.<sup>2</sup>

Including streets as one category, we can distinguish six different types of roads within the county, the other five being:

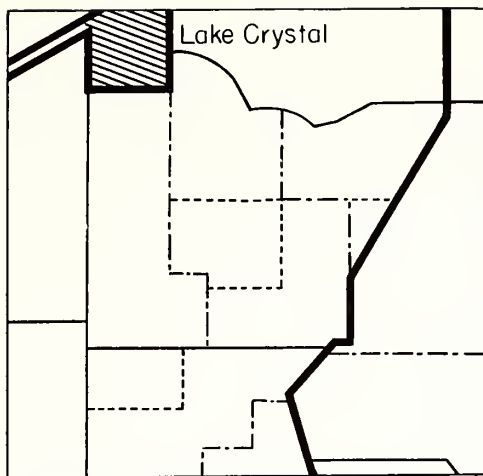
Township roads serve primarily as connecting links between farms, and as feeders to the larger road networks. They are constructed and maintained exclusively by the towns with very little financial aid and almost no administrative control from other units or levels of government.

County-aid roads are designed to carry intracounty or farm-to-market traffic. They are completely under the jurisdiction of the county, despite the fact that they are largely financed by the state.

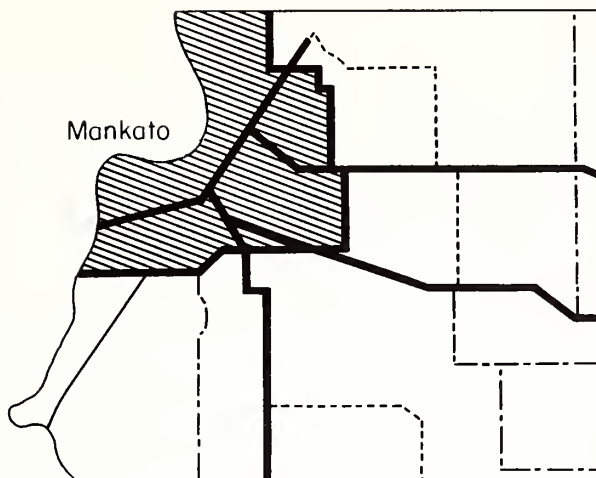
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<sup>1</sup>See Ylvisaker, The Natural Cement Controversy (Committee on Public Administration Cases, 1950).

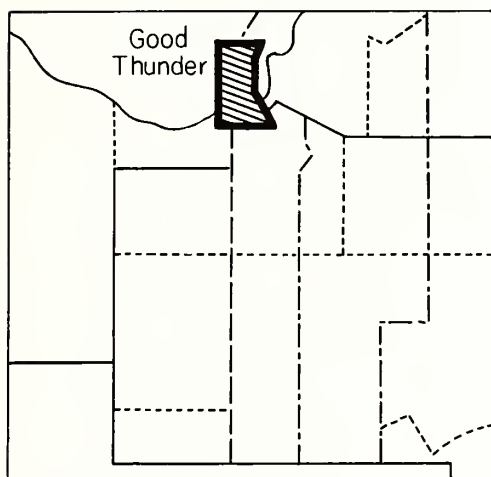
<sup>2</sup>Mankato, 73 miles; Lake Crystal, 9 miles; the remaining cities and villages, an estimated 20 miles.



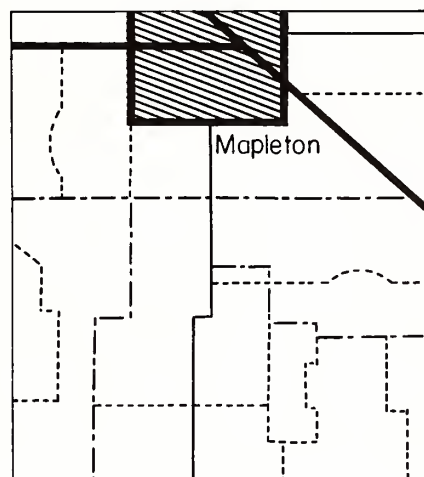
Garden City Township



Mankato Township



Lyra Township



Mapleton Township \*

Legend and total mileage of all roads in Blue Earth County \*

	Federal and state trunk highways	170
	State-aid roads	283
	Federal-aid secondary roads	7
	County-aid roads	357
	Township roads	636

Total miles 1453

\* Does not include Medo Township

FIGURE 10. TYPES OF ROADS AND HIGHWAYS IN FOUR BLUE EARTH COUNTY TOWNSHIPS

State-aid roads furnish routes for intercounty and farm-to-market travel. They fall under the state's supervision despite the fact that they are constructed, maintained, and largely financed by the county.

Federal-aid secondary roads are intended to supplement the trunk highway system. They are constructed and maintained by the county under close federal supervision. County and federal governments share equally the cost.

Trunk highways are the main arteries of state and interstate transport, financed jointly by state and federal governments. Actual construction and maintenance is carried out by the state department of highways, under the approval and continuing supervision of the United States Public Roads Administration.

#### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

It is customary but not entirely accurate to describe the course of development in local highway administration as a steady trend toward centralization. During the formative years of the community it was the federal and territorial governments rather than local units that supplied the area with its principal means of land transportation. As early as 1852, the territorial legislature authorized the building of a "road" between Mankato and the settlements along the Mississippi; and in 1853, Congress made the first of its direct appropriations for the construction of local military roads and bridges.<sup>3</sup> Even before this the United States Army had opened trails and built roads in what is now Minnesota.

It is also an oversimplification to assume that the state during its first years was not involved in local road administration. True, the Constitution of 1857 (Article IX, Section 5) forbade the state ever "to contract any debts for works of internal improvement or be a party in carrying on such works"—a provision which effectively restrained the state from participating in road development for the following half century. But the provision was observed in a curious manner. In the first place, local units, agents of the state and theoretically incapable of doing what their creator could not, were held to be exempt from the restricting clause and therefore free to engage in road construction. Second, the legislature continued through its device of special legislation to examine every major road project contemplated by local units. Thus, it was only by special act in 1877 that Mankato, Blue Earth County, and a neighboring township were enabled to build a bridge across the Minnesota River.

Local units, then, assumed the function of building roads where the federal government left off, and continued their work under the general surveillance of the state legislature. Until 1900 they were not very active. The day of the automobile had not yet arrived; steamboats were still providing regular passenger and freight service along the Minnesota River; and railroads were the coming thing in land transportation.

Certain land routes were necessary, of course, and local units stepped in to provide them. Mankato began to improve its thoroughfares shortly after the Civil War, one of its first recorded expenses being \$750 spent in 1866 for grading ravine roads. Three years later, the county facilitated local transport by building a span across the Blue Earth River—the first major bridge in the area to be locally financed. But

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<sup>3</sup>Army engineers went ahead with the necessary survey work immediately, and contracts were let early in 1855. Hughes' description (*op. cit.*, p. 62) gives the rest of the story: "Three contracts were let and two went to residents who on June 14 began work with sixty men and eight or ten yoke of oxen."



the system was still primitive: "They called them roads in that day—they were paths from which the trees had been cleared. Stage coach passengers took a tight hold at the beginning of the trip and arrived weary, jolted and bruised at their destinations".<sup>4</sup>

Despite these conditions, local trusteeship over highway development was not threatened until the turn of the century, although by that time there were abundant signs that the problem had outgrown the capacity of local units. One indication was the dissatisfaction with local mail service. Free rural delivery in sections where road conditions allowed served only to increase the community's appetite for more of the same, but expansion depended upon the improvement of both local and connecting road facilities. Abandonment of the steamboat trade, caused by a permanent drop in the river level, placed a further burden on the local road system and strengthened the demand for improvement.

But it was the automobile and its aggressive owner that gave force to the better roads movement. Local "daredevils" soon found it all but impossible to navigate the primitive lanes open to them,<sup>5</sup> and joined their less adventuresome sympathizers, the bicycle enthusiasts, in an all-out attack on the local road problem. Relying on persistence and their own finances, they finally dissolved the skepticism of the community and moved local units into the main stream of contemporary development.

The first advance occurred in 1898, when the state was authorized by constitutional amendment to extend aid to counties for the construction and maintenance of local roads and bridges. The state property tax upon which the grants were to depend<sup>6</sup> was not levied until 1905; but within seven years of that date, its rate had been increased from one-twentieth mill to a full mill. Local benefits grew apace, with Blue Earth's annual total reaching nearly \$5000 in 1911 and more than \$30,000 in 1921.

Note that the state was still not directly involved in construction and maintenance, although under its grant-in-aid program it managed to exercise a certain amount of supervision over local activity. Direct action was not taken until 1921, and came then as a delayed reaction to the federal highway act of 1916. On the promise of federal aid, the state ratified a trunk highway amendment in 1920 and during the following year implemented its provisions by statutory and administrative action. To the commissioner of highways, first appointed in that year, went the responsibility for maintaining the 7000 miles of county road newly absorbed into the trunk-highway system and for completing the construction work contemplated by the amendment.

The framework for the present system of highway administration was thus complete. Subsequently the state adopted two constitutional amendments, the first in 1924 providing for a gasoline excise tax the revenue from which was to be earmarked for trunk highways; the second in 1928 diverting one third of the gas tax yield to an expanded program of aid for county roads. Later federal developments have involved a more or

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<sup>4</sup>Mankato Free Press, Anniversary Edition, April 5, 1937.

<sup>5</sup>"They still called them roads—not paths any more but rough ungraveled tracks with ditches plowed on either side to give them drainage. Spring rains left them deep in mud, almost impassable for a horse and buggy, worse than the plowed fields on either side. A trip in a car any day without punctures or other mishap was viewed as a golden reward, to be expected not more than once in a lifetime" (*ibid.*). These roads were not entirely "open," however, because the law required automobiles to stop until horse-drawn vehicles had safely passed.

<sup>6</sup>Supplementary revenue was obtained from income on investments in the internal improvement land fund.

less steady increase in the amount and variety of aids, especially during the depression and recent war periods, and a continuous adjustment in methods of supervision.<sup>7</sup>

#### CURRENT ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE OF HIGHWAYS

Again, it would be fruitless to consider the mechanics of highway administration without reference to the habits and attitudes of the community.

To begin with, no one in the community questions the necessity for public highways. Two reasons are obvious: Roads are essential to the life of the community and cannot profitably be operated under private management. And highways do not involve the delicate relationships between government and the individual that give rise to controversy (and help explain the fragmentation) in both health and agriculture. In the comparatively few cases where the individual suffers injury, as in proceedings under eminent domain, he registers his complaint not as a representative of the people against the tyranny of government but as one citizen obstructing the action of the many.

Highway personnel are relieved of the stigma usually attached to governmental employees and are not consciously included in the muttered references to the "bureaucrats." On the contrary, they enjoy as much prestige as their equivalent ranks in private enterprise. The instinct of workmanship runs strong within the community, and respect is paid to those whose work results in a measurable and useful product.

Thus, in highway administration there is no background of conflict between government and the individual and no undercurrent of antagonism toward administrative personnel. Instead, the controversy involves jurisdictions. These questions are constantly asked: Which government? How much of the responsibility?

In answering these questions, personalities have not played the part that they have in agriculture and health. In local highway administration, no one figure has emerged in Blue Earth County who can parallel the influence of County Agent MacMillan or of Dr. Hielscher. The principal reason seems to be that the service involved is not so readily identified with the personality of its administrator. Highways are a product of standardized equipment and techniques, and they can be built as well by one qualified engineer as by another.

#### The Role of the Towns

The towns are insignificant in nearly all other functions of government, but they are important in the case of roads. (See Table 3.) Without assistance, they construct, maintain, and finance nearly half the total mileage of roads in the county. Town organization for road purposes is elementary. Minnesota statutes allow the town to divide itself into a maximum of four road districts, each supervised by a road overseer who is chosen at the annual town meeting. Few towns in Blue Earth County avail themselves of this option, preferring to run their area as one district. The employees usually involved are the elected road overseers (the number varies), perhaps a grader operator, and enough farmers to haul gravel and drag the roads. The farmers work under contract.

The plight of the town in an era of centralization can be attributed to the fact that, though originally established as rural units for general governmental purposes,

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<sup>7</sup>See James Maxwell, The Fiscal Impact of Federalism in the United States (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946), Chapter IX. Editors' Note: On this subject in general see R. A. Gomez, Intergovernmental Relations in Highways (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1950), pp. 7-10, 29-47.

TABLE 3. TOWN ROADS IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY ON JUNE 1, 1943 (In Miles)\*

Township	Unimproved	Graded and Drained, Not Surfaced	Graded, Surfaced, and Drained	Not Graded and Drained	Total
Danville.....	.75	4.50	21.25		26.50
McPherson.....	1.75	5.25	39.00		46.00
LeRay.....			42.00		42.00
Jamestown.....			13.00	1.00	14.00
Mapleton.....	2.00	15.00	13.00		30.00
Beauford.....	2.50	4.00	12.50		19.00
Decoria.....	1.00		36.00		37.00
Mankato.....		3.00	45.00		48.00
Lime.....	8.00		12.00		20.00
Sterling.....		17.00	14.00		31.00
Lyra.....		2.00	31.00		33.00
Rapidan.....	2.00		38.00		40.00
South Bend.....		2.00	25.00		27.00
Shelby.....	7.00	.75	24.00		31.75
Vernon Center.....			28.00		28.00
Garden City.....	9.00		16.00		25.00
Judson.....	1.00	1.50	20.25		22.75
Pleasant Mound.....			33.75		33.75
Ceresco.....	1.50		25.00		26.50
Lincoln.....			18.50		18.50
Butternut Valley.....	6.00		20.00		26.00
Cambria.....			10.50		10.50
Total	42.50	55.00	537.75	1.00	636.25

\*Medo Township did not report.

towns have dwindled into ad hoc organizations, devoted almost exclusively to road administration. In 1943, as shown in Table 4, 83 per cent of the entire revenue of the twenty-three towns in Blue Earth County was used to construct and maintain roads. This figure represents an increase of 22 per cent over the proportion spent on roads in 1934.

The story can be told just as clearly in terms of an individual unit. Mankato Township in 1900 assigned 6 per cent of its revenue to highway development, 70 per cent in 1920, and 95 per cent in 1945. Actual figures put the case more sharply than

TABLE 4. PERCENTAGE OF TOWNSHIP TAXES COLLECTED BY THE BLUE EARTH COUNTY TREASURER FOR GENERAL REVENUE PURPOSES AND FOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE FROM 1934 TO 1943\*

Year Collected	General Revenue	Road Construction and Maintenance	Total Taxes Collected
1934.....	38.9%	61.1%	100.0%
1935.....	30.9	69.1	100.0
1936.....	38.8	61.2	100.0
1937.....	34.9	65.1	100.0
1938.....	43.3	56.7	100.0
1939.....	41.9	58.1	100.0
1940.....	38.4	61.6	100.0
1941.....	15.3	84.7	100.0
1942.....	16.3	83.7	100.0
1943.....	17.0	83.0	100.0
Average.....	31.2%	68.8%	100.0%

\*The table does not include any amounts (special assessments, etc.) that might have been collected by other officers than the county treasurer.



percentages. In 1900, Lyra Township operated on a budget of \$86.03, of which \$59.16 went for road maintenance; by 1945, it had experienced an eightfold increase in total outlay, all but one seventh of which was attributable to the rise in road expenditures. Mankato Township during the same period expanded its over-all budget from \$1000 to \$9000, but in 1945 was actually spending less on non-highway items than in 1900.

The same trend can be seen in the aggregate shift over the ten-year period 1934-43; during that time, non-highway expenditures of the twenty-three towns declined 25 per cent, while their over-all budgets increased by 33 per cent.

There is little need to carry the argument further; the basic point is obvious. To argue that the towns should be relieved of their responsibilities for road administration is equivalent to a proposal that the town be retired as a unit of government. Town officials are well aware of their precarious position and are prepared to fight any move to centralize highway administration outright.

At present, there are several counts in their favor. For one, they have managed to keep their 636 miles of road in a good state of repair; in 1943, over 80 per cent were graded, surfaced (usually graveled), and drained. Second, the roads remaining under town jurisdiction are for the most part distinctly local in character, and an understanding has been reached between town and county which assures that further absorption of town roads into the county system will be accomplished by agreement. And, most important, the towns of Blue Earth County are able to stand the financial burden. Their budgets are balanced; tax delinquency is low; only occasionally do they take advantage of the aid available to them from the county. During the ten-year period under consideration, such assistance amounted to less than \$4000—approximately 0.4 per cent of the towns' total road expenditures.

Their strength is also their weakness. Eight towns have purchased their own motor graders. Three of these were large machines costing approximately \$7500 apiece.<sup>8</sup> Since none of these townships has the 100 miles of road which is standard for the effective use of such equipment,<sup>9</sup> they lay themselves open to the charge of inefficiency. Further, as the county engineer points out, town operators are inexperienced and contribute to the rapid depreciation of their equipment.

A second problem concerns the method of town financing. All town revenues are derived from the general property tax, which means that road expenditures impose an additional load on an already overburdened source of revenue. It does not help much that the tax for road purposes has been limited by statute to 15 mills;<sup>10</sup> when necessary, the town board may levy an additional tax of 5 mills. And there is the additional factor to consider that three other overlapping units—school district, county, and state—have yet to add their levies before the total property tax bill is complete.

While further developments will depend upon such factors as changes in the character of demand for road service and in the fiscal abilities of the towns, there is reason to believe that an equilibrium has already been reached between the forces of centralization and town autonomy. Gradual absorption of town roads into the major system continues under the county's policy of selecting the more heavily traveled

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<sup>8</sup>All other townships contract with private operators or with farmers.

<sup>9</sup>Nor do they share the use of their graders with neighboring towns.

<sup>10</sup>To this is added a compulsory one-mill dragging tax levied by the county auditor for town purposes. (See Table 5.) Towns must give preference to main-traveled and rural mail routes in spending the proceeds.

TABLE 5. TOWNSHIP TAXES COLLECTED BY THE BLUE EARTH COUNTY TREASURER FROM 1934 TO 1943\*

Year Collected	General Revenue	Road and Bridge	Dragging	Total	Total Taxes Collected
1934.....	\$ 25,759.65	\$ 26,147.90	\$ 14,364.37	\$ 40,512.27	\$ 66,271.92
1945.....	21,470.23	36,337.27	11,779.65	48,116.92	69,587.15
1936.....	33,990.94	42,106.15	11,434.44	53,540.59	87,531.53
1937.....	38,681.44	61,352.67	11,165.14	72,517.81	111,199.25
1938.....	48,053.33	51,819.85	10,995.65	62,815.50	110,868.83
1939.....	47,274.98	54,304.68	11,133.38	65,438.06	112,713.04
1940.....	46,613.89	63,404.74	11,465.30	74,870.04	121,483.93
1941.....	18,410.39	89,962.17	11,496.12	101,458.29	119,868.68
1942.....	18,626.78	84,265.78	11,591.92	95,857.70	114,484.48
1943.....	16,983.48	70,991.01	11,630.68	82,621.69	99,605.17
Total...	\$315,865.11	\$580,692.22	\$117,056.65	\$697,748.87	\$1,013,613.98

\*The table does not include any amounts (special assessments, etc.) that might have been collected by other officers than the county treasurer.

roads for improvements. But the policy operates in such a way as to satisfy the requirements of improved service without destroying the integrity of town government.<sup>11</sup>

There is an impressive argument in favor of continued town management of those roads not designated for absorption. As the division of responsibilities for roads now stands, it expresses the balance struck in town meetings between what the people of the township would like and what they are willing to pay for. With more assumption by the state of highway responsibilities and a less direct impact upon the local taxpayer to pay for roads, there would likely be a rapid transformation in local attitudes and a consequent demand for far more expensive service.

#### The Role of Cities and Villages

In the administration and financing of highways in Minnesota, a sharp division has been made between urban and rural systems. Its effect in Blue Earth County has been to exclude cities and villages from any share in the moneys dispensed by county, state, and federal governments.<sup>12</sup> It is not clear just where the distinction began. Partly it arose from the comparative ease and low cost of communication within closely settled areas; partly it is a reflection of the ratio of urban to rural mileage; and certainly it owes much to the dominance of rural interests in the state legislature.

<sup>11</sup>All is not sweetness and light. One of the major "bugs" in town maintenance has been the problem of snow removal; and the suggestion has been made that the county do the job. Mr. Engwalson, county engineer in 1945, meets the suggestion with little enthusiasm. He feels that rather than have the county maintain the roads during the six most expensive months of the year, the county would be better advised to take over the town road system entirely. Moreover, both he and the state commissioner of highways are quick to point out flaws in town highway management.

<sup>12</sup>An exception should be noted in the case of streets designated as part of the major highway system. Chapter 225, Minnesota Laws, 1939, permits the commissioner of highways to enter into agreements with municipalities to cooperate in improving trunk highways which extend within municipal limits. Agreements may cover the cost of work already performed by the municipality. Editors' Note: United States aid for urban connections to main highways began in 1945, just after this study was completed. It has since become an important factor in highway finance in Minnesota, especially for the larger cities.

Whatever its origins, cities and villages in Blue Earth County have found the distinction an expensive one. Cut off from federal aid, gas tax receipts, and other revenues, they have been forced to rely on general and special levies against urban property. Over the years, their burden has increased steadily. In 1911, at the beginning of the automobile and good roads era, cities and villages (not including Amboy, St. Clair, and Eagle Lake) spent \$53,173.36 for street development—almost twice as much as the county and towns combined.<sup>13</sup> Three fourths of this amount was disbursed by Mankato. By 1942, total urban outlay had risen to \$101,000 (not including Madison Lake or Lake Crystal), 80 per cent disbursed by Mankato. Combined county and town expenditures during that year amounted to \$277,000, one third of it derived from state grants to the county.<sup>14</sup>

In view of the size of urban road expenditures and the lack of outside help, one is likely to conclude that the system is unjust. It is. But there is a certain logic involved that makes the burden acceptable to the urban citizenry. Their situation is analogous to that of the towns which, with smaller populations, are forced to raise equal amounts to support their road systems. Also, it is not the location of roads but the benefits accruing from them that determines willingness to pay; and urban taxpayers are fully aware of the commercial and other advantages of rural transportation. There are not many urban residents, therefore, who take the "inequity" seriously, although every one of them will cheer if state and federal aid is extended to municipalities.<sup>15</sup>

A significant feature of the system is that streets—like the roads of the town—remain directly expressive of the balance between cost and desire. Since no grants are available to lighten the financial burden of better service, there are vast differences between the quality of streets in smaller and in larger communities. In the case of five of the smaller villages, cost and demand curves intersect at a low level; and service at best consists of graveled roads which are deemed satisfactory if they remain passable during the spring thaw and rainy season.

Little need be said regarding organization and management. Of the nine municipalities, only three make provision for full-time street employees; two maintain street departments. Among the rest, street expenditures appear as random entries in single-entry accounts. Lyra Township, in 1940, is an example:

33 hours shoveling snow.....	\$48.75
Bag of chloride.....	3.00
Repair grader.....	5.00
Digging.....	30.76
Hauling gravel.....	66.00
Dragging.....	7.73

<sup>13</sup>Municipal figures have been taken from the annual reports of the state tax commission (1911) and of the public examiner (1938, 1942). County and town statistics were made available by the county auditor, and were supplemented by information obtained from the state department of highways. It should be noted also that county expenditures in 1911 included nearly \$5000 in state aids.

<sup>14</sup>Municipalities other than Mankato average approximately \$5000 annually for road expenses. The figure is somewhat misleading since the outlays of five of the eight units generally fall well below that figure. Amboy and Lake Crystal on the other hand both spend approximately twice that amount.

<sup>15</sup>Editors' Note: The share that urban places shall have in the distribution of highway-user revenues in Minnesota continues to be a major point of contention between urban and rural interests. See editors' notes in footnotes 7 and 12 above.



### The Role of the County

One can distinguish three periods in the development of Blue Earth County's role in highway administration.

The first was a rather idyllic one lasting roughly until the turn of the century. During this period roads were primitive, and the county's role was limited principally to the construction of bridges. Between 1869 and 1908, the county took part in the construction of eighty-four bridges at a total (unsubsidized) cost of \$295,744.74.

A new era began in 1905 with the first state grants for road development. Encouraged by these grants, the county drew heavily upon its own resources and soon came to dominate the local highway scene. Its total collections for highway purposes doubled between 1899 and 1911; in the next decade they climbed even more abruptly from \$25,000 to \$150,000. This increase in county activity continued until 1929, when the total levy reached \$200,000. From that point on, local revenues fell off sharply, the need for them having been removed by increased state aids.

Clearly, a third stage had been reached by 1929: that of state and federal leadership in local highway development, with the county becoming less autonomous and more an administrative agent of the two central governments. The transition actually began in 1920 with the passage of the trunk highway amendment and the entrance of the state into the actual work of construction and maintenance at the local level. Before that year, the county had been responsible for maintaining and improving two classes of roads: its own, and a second group (smaller in terms of mileage) upon which state aids were being expended. Half of the latter were absorbed by the state as trunk highways in 1920 and the rest continued under the county as state-aid roads, to be operated and financed as before. Under the gas tax legislation of 1929, however, all roads maintained by the county were designated either as state-aid or as county-aid roads. County roads as such disappeared, and with them the autonomous position of the county in highway development.

Today the county is concerned with four different categories of roads: town roads, county-aid roads, state-aid roads, and federal-aid secondary roads.

Town Roads. The county influences town administration in three ways. It acts, first, in a supervisory capacity. Whenever there is a written complaint that a town road has become impassable because of local negligence, it must be considered by the county board in a special meeting. If the board finds that the objection is well founded, it directs town officials to remedy the situation within thirty days; otherwise the matter will be handled directly by the county's highway department, with the costs charged to the town. The county's action is hedged about by statutory restrictions on the amount that can be spent—in this case no more than the amount which can be derived from a one-mill tax on property within the town involved. Actually, the supervisory powers have seldom been called into play.

Second, the county may be called upon to extend direct financial aid. As indicated above, towns have been slow to avail themselves of this assistance; between 1934 and 1943, grants averaged around \$400 annually. Although increasing within recent years, the figure is still below \$1000.

The third relationship is much more significant. Since coming into their full inheritance of state aid in 1929, Minnesota counties have been in a position to absorb town roads into their county-aid systems. Blue Earth County proceeded to do so gradually (beginning in 1934) and without falling prey to the difficulties experienced by other counties. (At least one of them has taken over so many town roads that the available state aid is barely enough to cover maintenance, with nothing left for improvement. Other counties, anxious to avoid controversy, have apportioned their

gas tax aid equally among the towns and have thus found it impossible to concentrate on needed construction work within any one area. Still others have distributed the funds as outright grants to be spent directly by the towns; this practice may relieve the county of a certain amount of construction and maintenance work, but it tends to perpetuate existing weaknesses in town administration.)

The Blue Earth policy has been to delay absorbing town roads until sufficient funds are available to carry out each project according to standards which match those prescribed by the state for its secondary highways. Gas tax funds are not apportioned among the towns equally in any one year, but are used in such a way as to enable the county to do a thorough job on one or a few construction projects. Over a period of years, however, care is taken to maintain an equitable ratio of improved roads among all twenty-three towns. The county also follows a policy of requiring the towns to contribute 20 per cent to the construction costs of whatever roads are taken over. As the county engineer was careful to point out, this requirement is no longer a statutory provision, having become optional in 1936. The county continues to enforce it as a means of impressing upon the towns the costs of improved service.

County-Aid Roads. These include the town roads taken over since 1934, together with all county roads not absorbed after 1921 into the state-aid or trunk-highway systems. They comprise approximately one fourth of the total mileage of roads within the community and are planned, constructed, and maintained exclusively by the county.

Although Blue Earth administers them according to the standards set by the state for its secondary system, county-aid roads generally are intended to serve county rather than state traffic and have customarily been maintained in Class C condition. The financial system underlying their construction and maintenance seems, therefore, rather difficult to justify. By this system, the state pays, on the average, three fourths of the entire cost<sup>16</sup>—as shown in Table 6—while the county is free to maintain the roads however it sees fit. (See also Tables 7 and 8.)

TABLE 6. BLUE EARTH COUNTY-AID ACCOUNT

Year	Collected Locally			Received from State Gas Tax Allotment	Total
	From Town- ships and Other Counties	From Refunds, Net Transfers, etc.*	Total		
1934.....	\$ 5,671	\$-5,638	\$ 33	\$ 47,000	\$ 47,033
1935.....	23,291	34,569	57,860	49,100	106,960
1936.....	26,083	- 270	25,813	53,100	78,913
1937.....	12,966	20,677	33,643	72,000	105,643
1938.....	1,543	-5,414	-3,871	97,980	94,109
1939.....	18,356	14,697	33,053	104,480	137,533
1940.....	16,014	.....	16,014	100,000	116,014
1941.....	11,103	5,229	16,332	86,250	102,582
1942.....	19,094	5,000	24,094	71,000	95,094
1943.....	4,511	.....	4,511	59,250	63,761
Total.....	\$138,632	\$68,850	\$207,482	\$740,160	\$947,642
Percentage.	14.6%	7.3%	21.9%	78.1%	100.0%

\*A minus sign indicates that there were more transfers out of the fund than into it.

<sup>16</sup>The county cannot use its gas tax funds to buy equipment. If, however, the road and bridge fund runs low and the gas tax fund has a surplus, the latter can be charged a rental fee for any county equipment used on county-aid roads. To date, Blue Earth County has not been forced to resort to this technique.

TABLE 7. THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN LOCAL HIGHWAYS: GAS TAX REVENUE  
ALLOTTED FOR SUPPORT OF COUNTY-AID ROADS IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY  
JANUARY 1, 1929, TO JULY 20, 1944

Year	Allotments	Payments	Balance
1929.....	\$ 30,030.00	\$ 15,015.00	\$ 15,015.00
1930.....	44,940.00	37,485.00	22,470.00
1931.....	34,940.00	39,940.00	17,470.00
1932.....	48,000.00	41,470.00	24,000.00
1933.....	50,000.00	49,000.00	25,000.00
1934.....	44,000.00	47,000.00	22,000.00
1935.....	54,200.00	49,100.00	27,100.00
1936.....	52,000.00	53,100.00	26,000.00
1937.....	92,000.00	72,000.00	46,000.00
1938.....	103,960.00	97,980.00	51,980.00
1939.....	105,000.00	104,480.00	52,500.00
1940.....	95,000.00	100,000.00	47,500.00
1941.....	77,500.00	86,250.00	38,750.00
1942.....	64,500.00	71,000.00	32,250.00
1943.....	54,000.00	32,250.00	54,000.00
1944.....	54,000.00	.....	105,000.00
Total.....	\$1,094,070.00	\$896,070.00	

TABLE 8. THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN LOCAL HIGHWAYS: ALLOTMENTS FOR SUPPORT OF  
STATE-AID ROADS IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY, JANUARY 1, 1921, TO JUNE 15, 1944

Year	Allotments	Payments, Maintenance	Payments, Construction	Total Payments	Balance
1921.....	\$ 25,250.00	\$ 7,575.00	\$ 9,950.24	\$ 17,525.24	\$ 7,724.76
1922.....	29,200.00	8,760.00	28,164.76	36,924.76	.....
1923.....	29,450.00	7,951.50	14,410.78	22,362.28	7,087.72
1924.....	29,500.00	6,783.50	29,804.22	36,587.72	.....
1925.....	28,600.00	4,862.00	9,419.02	14,281.02	14,318.98
1926.....	28,575.00	5,715.75	32,891.98	38,607.73	4,286.25
1927.....	27,505.00	5,533.10	22,132.40	27,665.50	4,125.75
1928.....	27,505.00	5,501.00	22,004.00	27,505.00	4,125.75
1929.....	28,479.00	5,666.58	19,828.89	25,495.47	7,109.28
1930.....	28,479.00	6,278.48	14,834.96	21,113.44	14,474.84
1931.....	37,642.00	9,544.05	19,776.82	29,320.87	22,795.97
1932.....	27,795.00	25,353.99	15,284.28	40,638.27	9,952.70
1933.....	19,221.00	16,073.29	8,012.78	24,086.07	5,087.63
1934.....	17,207.00	19,713.58		19,713.58	2,581.05
1935.....	15,927.00	18,508.05		18,508.05	.....
1936.....	15,967.00	13,571.95		13,571.95	2,395.05
1937.....	18,833.00	21,228.05		21,228.05	.....
1938.....	19,042.00	15,282.71		15,282.71	3,759.29
1939.....	18,784.00	19,725.69		19,725.69	2,817.60
1940.....	18,869.00	18,856.25		18,856.25	2,830.35
1941.....	43,230.00	22,327.65		22,327.65	23,732.70
1942.....	19,115.00	19,688.45		19,688.45	23,159.25
1943.....	19,103.00	27,140.11	7,256.69	34,396.80	7,865.45
1944.....	19,716.00	19,624.05		19,624.05	7,957.40
Total.....	\$592,994.00	\$331,264.78	\$253,771.82	\$585,036.60	



Part of the explanation lies in the fact that the aids in this instance come from the state gas tax. Local constituencies and their political representatives have always regarded the revenue from this tax as rightfully theirs. It is not surprising that the framers of the 1928 amendment and subsequent legislation should have been as generous as they were—especially since they had already attended to the development of primary and secondary systems.

But the counties, Blue Earth included, are still not satisfied. Comparing the aid they received with the taxes they pay, the system seems rigged against them. Over the four-year period 1940-44, as shown by the figures in the following tabulation (obtained from the Minnesota department of taxation and the Minnesota department of highways), the state collected approximately three times as much in gas tax revenues as it distributed in county aids. The inequity disappears, however, when the cost-benefit

<u>Year</u>	<u>Net Gas Tax</u>	<u>Gas Tax Allotment</u>
1940.....	\$283,919.44	\$95,000
1941.....	309,000.59	77,500
1942.....	285,537.58	64,500
1943.....	217,607.80	54,000

ratio is calculated on a broader base—a point about which the local Chamber of Commerce and service clubs must be reminded whenever state aids are discussed. The following statement of the commissioner of highways is convincing:

"When the statement is made that Blue Earth County payments into the state gas tax fund far exceed the amount the county received back as its share of the gas tax apportionment for county aid roads . . . it is not clear whether this refers to total payments into the gas tax fund from Blue Earth County or the one-third which goes into the state road and bridge fund. The two-thirds which goes into the trunk highway fund comes back to the counties in the form of trunk highway construction and maintenance. From 1921 to 1944 inclusive, the estimated gas tax receipts in the trunk highway fund collected in Blue Earth County totaled \$2,662,987.11, this figure representing the total net receipts from 1925 until the Constitution was amended in 1928, and two-thirds of the receipts from that time until 1944. Motor vehicle receipts from Blue Earth County from 1921 to 1944 [totaled] \$3,544,321.68. This makes total receipts in the trunk highway fund from Blue Earth County of \$6,207,308.79. In the same period, the Department expended for construction in Blue Earth County \$4,879,794.31, for maintenance \$1,888,798.82, a total of \$6,768,593.13. This represents a net gain to the county of \$561,284.34 . . . on the basis of trunk highway accounts. The one-third of the estimated gas tax collections in Blue Earth County from 1929 to 1944 which have been credited to the state road and bridge fund total \$1,176,441.08. In this same period the gas tax allotments to Blue Earth County for county-aid roads total \$1,004.070. However, since 1941 when the one-mill state-aid road tax was repealed, \$1,200,000 has been appropriated annually from the gas tax receipts for allotment to state-aid roads, and the allotment for state-aid roads in Blue Earth County coming from gas tax receipts from 1941 to 1944 total \$77,049. This makes a total of \$1,081,119 allotted to Blue Earth County from gas tax receipts in the state road and bridge fund or only \$95,322 less than the receipts from that county. In the allotments from the state road and bridge fund the medium size counties like Blue Earth usually receive approximately the same amount as they pay in, while the very large counties receive less . . . and the smaller counties receive more . . . This is

because of the Constitutional provisions governing these allotments."<sup>17</sup> (Underscoring supplied.)

State-Aid Roads. These are also built and maintained by the county, but under the close supervision of the state highway department. Established in 1921 as a separate system, they embrace about one fifth the total mileage of roads in the county. The distinction between state-aid and county-aid roads in Blue Earth County has meaning only in a technical sense. The roads themselves look alike, are built and maintained according to the same standards, and serve essentially the same purposes.<sup>18</sup>

Nominally, state-aid roads are an integral part of the state highway system and a full grade above the county-aid system in importance and quality. All plans for their construction as well as the standards for their maintenance must be approved and established by the state department of highways—a far cry from the unrestricted jurisdiction which the county exercises over the county-aid system. Continuing supervision is carried out through the state district highway engineer, who usually invites the county engineer to join him on his inspectional tours. If satisfied, as he usually is, he exchanges pleasantries with the county engineer and returns to his own line of duty; if not, the two of them iron out the problem together. The district engineer may, in case of deadlock, ask the state commissioner of highways for authority to proceed with whatever work he believes necessary, the cost to be deducted from future state-aid payments to the county.

The most curious feature involved in the distinction between the two systems of roads is that the state-aid system, though nominally the one in which the state is more interested, is financed primarily by the county. Table 9 shows that over the

TABLE 9. MONEYS COLLECTED LOCALLY AND STATE AID RECEIVED BY  
BLUE EARTH COUNTY FOR STATE-AID ROADS, 1934-43

Year	Received from State*	Collected Locally	Total
1934.....	\$ 19,714	\$ 51,976	\$ 71,690
1935.....	16,119	29,618	45,737
1936.....	15,961	28,305	44,266
1937.....	21,228	46,861	68,089
1938.....	15,283	87,106	102,389
1939.....	19,726	84,458	104,184
1940.....	18,856	86,137	104,993
1941.....	22,328	84,806	107,134
1942.....	19,688	86,416	106,104
1943.....	34,397	83,636	118,033
Total.....	\$203,300	\$669,319	\$872,619
Percentage...	23.3%	76.7%	100.0%

\*This does not include unexpended allotments of nearly \$8000.  
See Table 8.

<sup>17</sup>Letter to the Blue Earth County Council on Intergovernmental Relations, November 14, 1945. Summarized, the letter shows that the county received \$465,962.34 worth of service it did not pay for. The argument is only slightly less convincing if one adds to local payments the property levies which the state collected until 1941 (the one-mill road and bridge tax).

<sup>18</sup>There is a very real point of difference as respects the municipalities. State-aid roads can be county-maintained (including curb and gutter construction) through cities and villages. Not so county-aid roads which stop at city or village limits.

ten-year period 1934-43 the county contributed \$669,319 (76.7 per cent) as compared with the state's total payments of \$203,300. It will be noted that the proportions are almost the exact reverse of those involved in the financing of county-aid roads.

In addition to the difference in proportions, there is also a clear division in the sources of revenue. Those available from the county are derived from the county road and bridge tax which is included in the general property tax levy. Those supplied by the state come from three sources: not less than 1 per cent, nor more than 3 per cent of that portion of the state road and bridge fund which is earmarked for this purpose; income from investments in the state internal improvement land fund; and \$1,200,000 of the gas tax revenues.<sup>19</sup>

Federal-Aid Secondary Roads. This system was originally intended as a network of well-developed roads supplementary to the trunk highway system—similar to the state-aid system, but dependent upon federal rather than state funds. The program had not made much headway in Blue Earth County before World War II, the single project being seven miles constructed in 1938.

Several reasons have been suggested for the slow progress on this program. Most common among them seems to be the argument that the county has been waiting to obtain assistance with local, not intercounty, roads, and that participation in the federal-aid program would tend to divert attention from other more necessary projects. This contention does not seem to square with the provisions of the Hayden-Cartwright Act which intended federal aid to be used for local purposes. Even less convincing is the county engineer's argument that federal standards are too high.<sup>20</sup>

The actual arrangements involved in the federal-aid secondary program illustrate the highly developed symmetry of intergovernmental relations in the highway field. The Federal Public Roads Administration does not deal directly with the county. Rather, the county board authorizes the state commissioner of highways to act as its agent in negotiating the agreement. Plans covering the contemplated project are submitted to the commissioner by the county highway engineer; if approved, they are forwarded along with the application for funds to the Public Roads Administration. If federal funds are granted, the county must deposit an amount with the state treasurer representing its share of the estimated construction cost; this amount will be pooled with the federal aid and spent as directed by the state commissioner of highways.

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<sup>19</sup>This was added in 1941. Arrangements before that time are described in the letter from the state commissioner quoted above.

The year 1944 marked the end of another type of state aid. The trunk highway amendment of 1920 anticipated that counties would defer their road activity until certain about which of their roads would be absorbed into the trunk highway system. To encourage continued construction, the amendment provided that county expenditures incurred after February 1, 1919, for the permanent improvement of roads later taken over by the state would be reimbursed from the state road and bridge fund. The last bond issues of Blue Earth County covered by this provision matured in 1944. Over the intervening years, total reimbursements to the county amounted to \$264,181.48.

<sup>20</sup>It is interesting to note the state commissioner's reaction to this argument: ". . . Public Roads Administration has recently revised its standards and this revision may in part at least remedy this situation. Actually, present minimum FAS road design requirements are below standards that would be acceptable to Blue Earth County." (Letter of November 14, 1945.)



Construction contracts are let in the commissioner's office in St. Paul but not until the county board has indicated its approval.<sup>21</sup> Once the project is under way, it is the commissioner's responsibility to appoint a qualified engineer as supervisor—his choice being the county engineer whenever possible. The latter continues to be paid by the county, but for the purposes of the job he is responsible to the state district engineer (acting for the state commissioner); together, they watch the project and settle any differences that may arise with contractors as to construction and procedure. Inspections are also carried out by engineers from the Public Roads Administration—the one instance of direct federal representation in the field.

The three-layer arrangement for supervision continues in effect even after the construction work is finished and all federal aids have been expended. Public Roads Administration engineers inspect and score the road semiannually, forwarding the results to the county engineer through the state commissioner of highways. If the record indicates that the county is not maintaining the road satisfactorily, the responsibility falls upon the state district engineer to investigate. Should the county fail to follow his recommendations, the state may do so directly and deduct its expenses from future aids to the county.

Financing of the federal-aid secondaries rests on an equal sharing of construction costs by federal and county governments, with the county bearing all subsequent costs of upkeep. (All engineering costs are borne by the county.) In the case of the Blue Earth County project of 1938, the federal share amounted to \$11,454.79. The county promptly shifted its own half of the burden to the state by designating the seven miles involved as part of the county-aid system.

At the close of the war, it was evident that the idea of federal-county cooperation had not been abandoned. Plans for a second project were well under way in 1945, and the county had already been approved to receive federal aid for post war surveys and planning. The revival of interest may be interpreted as representing a change in local attitude toward "high federal standards"; but it is more realistic to assume that the county was reacting to its discovery that the seven miles of supposedly intercounty road have been put to good use as carriers of local traffic, and on the basis of this pleasant experience, the county board is revising its earlier estimate of the utility of federal aid.

#### The Role of State and Federal Governments: The Trunk Highway System

State and federal governments play a dual role in local highway development. On the one hand, as indicated in the sections above, they share in the administration and finance of county-built roads—the state in the case of county-aid and state-aid systems, and the federal government in the case of the federal-aid secondaries. On the other hand, they are jointly involved in the trunk highway system—a partnership which began in 1921. The following section is devoted to an account of the development, administration, and finance of that system with particular reference to Blue Earth County.

Development. When established in 1921, the trunk highway system immediately absorbed 106.3 miles of road in Blue Earth County. Twenty-two years later, its total mileage in the county stood at 169.22.

The slow rate of growth which these figures represent is to be accounted for by certain legal provisions. Article XVI of the Minnesota constitution (the trunk

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<sup>21</sup>County approval is not required; the commissioner depends upon it because the county board is usually more familiar than he with the work of the bidding contractors, most of whom have served the county on previous occasions.

highway amendment of 1920) and later legislation fix the general location for the state's 211 trunk highway routes. Seventy of these were established by the original amendment, which also provided that the legislature could designate additional routes if at least 75 per cent of the total number of miles in the original system had been constructed and permanently improved, and if sufficient funds were available to construct, improve, and maintain such extensions as were being contemplated. In 1933, the legislature decided that these conditions had been met, and 141 new routes were added to the trunk highway system. The expansion was immediately felt in Blue Earth County, but as Table VII shows, this was the only significant increase experienced within the county over the twenty-two-year period. The total mileage has remained constant.

Federal and state activity has not been so static as the constancy of mileage figures might indicate. Blue Earth motorists, for example, have an impression of steady expansion and improvement: over the years they have seen gravel replaced by tar, tar replaced by concrete, and roads widened, straightened, and much more effectively maintained.

A more objective index can be found in the successive annual expenditures of the two governments as reported in Tables 10 and 11. Table 10 gives the total costs of construction and maintenance of trunk highways in the Blue Earth County area.<sup>22</sup> It

TABLE 10. TRUNK HIGHWAY EXPENDITURES IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY, 1921-43

Year	Miles Maintained	Maintenance Cost	Betterments Cost	Construction Cost
1921*.....	106.3	\$ 31,817.43	\$ 3,860.68	\$ 71,790.40
1922*.....	102.3	34,324.39	19,185.43	84,646.73
1923*.....	101.4	52,939.07	33,219.51	10,870.71
1924†.....	101.7	41,229.51	29,074.18	152,670.15
1925†.....	101.7	41,413.69	25,191.54	230,394.41
1926†.....	99.5	58,897.08	11,594.62	43,603.63
1927†.....	99.8	78,619.37	826.72	6,431.39
1928†.....	102.9	70,211.38	1,526.92	192,461.11
1929†.....	102.9	70,720.90	391.34	211,558.54
1930†.....	102.9	55,566.53	1,890.52	795,420.35
1931§.....	97.8	64,298.59	27,935.06	492,536.82
1932*.....	97.8	62,428.36	18,244.19	540,054.38
1933.....	117.9	31,907.03	92.28	186,931.52
1934.....	171.2	77,024.15	4,196.54	129,245.02
1935.....	173.25	91,845.78	7,869.06	274,954.39
1936.....	173.25	125,883.41	13,408.93	268,725.85
1937.....	172.57	87,951.82	11,292.28	34,057.07
1938.....	172.57	89,344.19	4,061.64	69,910.75
1939.....	169.56	73,143.90	.....	69,538.29
1940.....	169.56	81,012.03	612.21	46,938.87
1941.....	170.83	84,999.69	950.15	175,632.47
1942.....	170.83	86,127.29	3,649.39	214,338.86
1943.....	169.22	74,690.24	1,871.34	61,477.24

\*Calendar year.

†November 1 to November 1.

‡January 1 to November 1.

§November 1, 1930, to December 31, 1931.

<sup>22</sup>A distinction should be drawn between those trunk highways which are designated as federal-aid roads (federal-aid primaries) and those which the state finances and controls by itself. Two of the trunk routes within Blue Earth County (U.S. Highways 14 and 169) fall in the first category; four (Numbers 22, 30, 60, and 83) in the second. Table VII does not allow for the distinction.

TABLE 11. FEDERAL FUNDS RECEIVED ON PROJECTS IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY FROM 1932 TO AUGUST 15, 1944

Year and Federal Number	Amount Received for Project	Amount Received in Year
1933		
FAP E 366 B.....	\$ 38,797.60	
FAP E 422 A.....	46,000.00	
FAP 422 B.....	30,000.00	
FAP 422 C.....	7,000.00	
FAP 422 D.....	100,000.00	
FAP E 434 C.....	55,000.00	\$276,797.60
1934		
NRM 216 B.....	49,352.73	
NRH 216 C.....	43,318.92	
NRM 216 D.....	2,768.87	
NRH 366 B (1).....	46,807.27	
NRM 366 B (2).....	6,347.41	148,595.20
1935		
NRH 216 E.....	26,685.90	
NRS 493 A.....	39,851.52	
NRS 493 B.....	14,416.93	
NRS 498 B.....	74,200.58	155,154.93
1936		
FAP 216 A & B.....	62,821.00	
FAP 216 C.....	38,113.00	
FAP 216 D.....	5,979.00	
FAP 216 F.....	9,414.00	
WPSS 498 B.....	13,581.58	
WPSO 627 A.....	10,920.00	
WPSS 757 A.....	2,616.37	
WPSO 783 A.....	8,120.00	
WPGS 906 A.....	27,746.00	179,310.95
1937*		
1938		
FAS 94 A (1).....	11,454.79	
FAP 366 B (3).....	45,690.19	57,144.98
1939*		
1940		
FAP 153 (2).....	34,496.54	
FAP 153 (3).....	16,866.80	
FAP 216 A & B (3).....	9,377.42	60,740.76
1941		
FAP 216 A & B (4).....	7,837.27	7,837.27
1942*		
1943*		
Total.....		\$885,581.69

\*No projects.

will be noted that expenditures for construction are the most variable factor, and further, that these expenditures reflect contemporary developments in state and national finance. Thus, the burst of activity in 1924 followed closely upon passage of the state gas tax amendment with its introduction of new revenues, and the sharp increase of 1930 accompanied the swing toward larger federal appropriations.

The full impact of federal expansion during the New Deal can be measured in terms of Blue Earth County by reference to Table 11. The figures in this table represent the special project grants made available by the federal government as part of its effort to counter the effects of the depression. These grants did not include the usual matching requirements that go with grants-in-aid and could be spent for the removal of grade crossings, for the widening of existing roads, and for other projects



not previously authorized. Outlays were particularly heavy until 1936, and then dropped off quickly after the congressional cutbacks of that year.

Administration. Despite the fact that the trunk highway system operates more or less independently of local government, it is not clearly divorced from the community. Three district headquarters are located in Mankato, staffed by personnel who are either "locals" or soon accepted as such. This is true at both administrative and crew levels. District engineers affiliate locally with other members of their profession and become respected figures in church groups and service clubs. If not completely responsive to local pressures, they are at least willing to represent local opinion in conferences with the state commissioner and arrange to hire local residents' sons who are home from college as seasonal help during summer vacations. Regular employees (members of clerical and maintenance crews) are part of the community, having been recruited locally.

The three district headquarters referred to above are those of the seventh highway construction district, the seventh highway laboratory district, and the fourteenth highway maintenance district. The first is captained by the district engineer, whose work in connection with state-aid and county-aid roads has been outlined above. Included in his staff are a clerk, a project engineer, an inspector, four engineering aids, and from eight to twenty employees. Since actual construction work is handled on a contract basis, the job of the staff consists chiefly in planning and supervising road development within the thirteen counties of the district. Closely connected with the construction unit is the seventh district laboratory, whose facilities are used for soil analysis and for the testing of construction materials. Though the fourteenth highway maintenance district serves only six counties, it is the largest of the three in terms of staff, with a district maintenance engineer in charge, a highway district foreman, eleven shop and field foremen, twenty highway sectionmen, seventeen highway section helpers, six maintenance equipment operators, twenty to fifty laborers (depending upon the season), and an office staff of five persons. All three units are directly responsible to the state commissioner of highways, who in turn acts as the state's agent in dealing with the federal Public Roads Administration. The latter's only representatives in the field are its project engineers and auditors.

Finance. Minnesota trunk highway finance still follows the main lines established in the amendment of 1920. Two funds were provided in that amendment: the trunk highway sinking fund and the trunk highway fund. The first is used to pay the principal and interest on state bonds issued to finance the trunk highway system. Its revenue is derived from proceeds of the state motor vehicle registration tax, any possible deficiencies being covered by direct appropriation.

The second fund is used directly to finance expenditures on the trunk highway system and to reimburse counties for whatever bonds they may have issued after 1919 in support of roads later absorbed by the state. The fund depends upon income from a number of different sources: (1) the surplus of the yield from the motor vehicle registration tax over and above the amount necessary to support sinking fund transactions (40 per cent of the amount transferred must be set aside for maintenance, and of this not more than 4 per cent is to be spent within any one county in any one year); (2) proceeds from the sale of bonds (bonds are not to exceed \$10 million per year, may be issued at no more than 5 per cent interest, and must mature within twenty years); (3) federal aids; (4) drivers' license and other fees; (5) two thirds of the revenue from the state gas tax (the tax income was dedicated entirely to the trunk highway system from 1924 to 1928; since 1928, one third of the tax has been earmarked for county-aid roads); and (6) deficiency loans from other funds (not to exceed the amount of federal aids in any one year).

Expenditures from the funds are controlled by the commissioner of highways acting in conference with the state auditor and state treasurer, and are limited to the following purposes: (1) departmental expenses (not to exceed \$150,000 annually); (2) maintenance; (3) reimbursement of county bond issues; (4) matching federal aid; and (5) construction.

In allocating available funds, priority is given to the first four purposes listed; what remains may be spent for construction. There are further conditions: during any one year, the commissioner is allowed to spend only 20 per cent of the authorized funds for construction of hard-surface roads. Nevertheless he may, at his discretion, increase the amount by 13.33 per cent if necessary to meet the conditions of federal grants. He may also transfer unused maintenance funds within each district for general construction purposes.

As noted before, a distinction should be made between trunk highways maintained with the aid of federal funds (federal-aid primaries) and those financed exclusively by the state.

### SUMMARY

Table 12 is a concise description of the administration and finance of highways in Blue Earth County. In terms of average annual outlays over the ten-year period 1934-43, the table shows the general equilibrium that has been achieved between two persistent forces: the demand for economy and local control, and the demand for adequate revenue and effective service. In this instance, the latter has been more powerful. Localism and frugality have had to take second place to an intensifying desire for better roads.

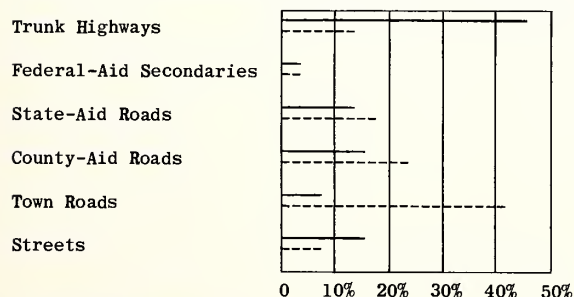
This has been especially true since the turn of the century. Automobiles could not travel on the rutted lanes which local government provided in 1900, so the hardy

TABLE 12. AVERAGE ANNUAL OUTLAY FOR STREETS, ROADS, AND HIGHWAYS IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY, 1934-43\*

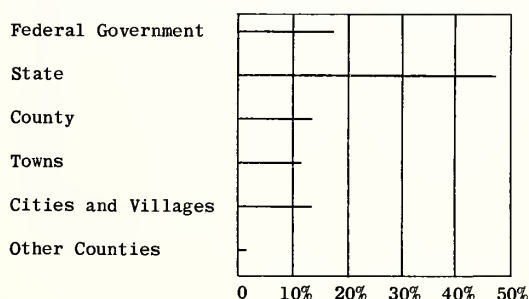
Item	Streets	Town Roads	County-Aid Roads	State-Aid Roads	Federal-Aid System	Trunk Highways	Total	Percentage of Total Outlay
Total mileage.....	100	636	357	283	7	170	1,553	
Percentage of total mileage.....	6.5%	41.0%	23.0%	18.0%	0.05%	11.0%	100.0%	
Average annual outlay.....	\$90,000	\$60,000	\$94,764	\$87,262	\$6,000	\$312,056	\$650,082	
Percentage of total outlay.....	13.9%	9.2%	14.6%	13.4%	0.9%	48.0%	100.0%	
Outlay by cities and villages...	\$90,000						\$90,000	13.9%
Outlay by towns.....		\$59,615†	\$9,775†				69,390	10.7
Outlay by county.....		385	6,885	\$66,932			74,202	11.4
Outlay by state.....			74,016	20,330	\$4,855	\$200,000†	299,201	46.0
Federal outlay.....					1,145	112,056†	113,201	17.4
Outlay by other counties.....			4,088				4,088	0.6

\*Graphically, the data may be shown as follows:

By Type of Roads: Percentage of Cost (—) and Mileage (---)



By Government Unit: Percentage of Total Outlay (—)



†Estimated breakdown.

pioneers of the horseless carriage movement in Blue Earth County set about immediately to correct the situation. Showing the same resolution and energy that bolster the cause of local government, they pressed the movement for good roads—and consciously and inevitably, the extension of the role of the central governments. Nor were they alone in inviting centralization. As pleasure drivers they would have had small impact upon the stolid character of local thought; but when they had proved the commercial value of the internal combustion engine, highways became not only a desirable but a necessary adjunct of community life. Farmers and merchants alike joined in the demand for state action.

The results of their activity are evident in Table 12. In 1945, twenty-nine out of every hundred miles of road in the county were either administered or directly supervised by one of the central governments, and another twenty-three (in the case of the county-aid roads) are constructed and maintained according to standards prescribed by the state. The picture in terms of cost is even more striking. Over the ten-year period 1934-43, nearly two thirds of all moneys spent upon the community's streets, roads, and highways were derived from state and federal sources.

But one will not find in these figures the complete account of government and highways at the grass roots. The rest of the story lies in the complex of community attitudes. One must see the community in two different situations. As consumers, members of the community are constantly asking for better service and are pleased as highway expenditures increase. The opening of Highway 14 some years ago—"straight as an arrow and better than anything Wisconsin has to offer"—attracted, it seemed, every motorist in the area and produced widespread demands for further construction. On the other hand, the community resumes its characteristic obstinacy when it deals with administration and finance. On Sunday, the Mankato merchant will enjoy the luxury of an afternoon drive along U.S. Highway 169 and will make a mental note to congratulate the district engineer on the new shoulder construction; Monday, he will attend a Kiwanis meeting and complain that too much gas tax money is being diverted to the state highway system. The same paradox is evident among administrators. The county engineer will grumble about the lack of realism at the federal level; meanwhile he is being suspected by the towns of desiring to subvert their autonomy.

The picture is not one of total satisfaction; but a patient eye can trace an inner logic in the system which guarantees a slow but reasonably satisfactory resolution of the crosscurrents of desire. Autonomy and economy have been achieved in the freedom given towns, villages, cities, and even the county; effective service and the needs of the larger community have been met by county, state, and federal action. As part of the larger community and as consumers, Blue Earth citizens have been as responsible as any in securing centralization; as taxpayers and as local officers or constituents, they have asked for and secured broad areas of discretion.



## CHAPTER 8

### Government and Finance

There is no more effective way of measuring the impact of modern government upon the Blue Earth community than by a study of its finance. Money is the great common denominator in the governmental process: it quantifies the dissimilar and complex functions of government, reduces them to common terms, and in a rough way reflects the going scale of values of the three different communities—local, state, and national.

Money is also a highly potent solvent of intergovernmental barriers. On the promise of aid, local units of government have succumbed to the wishes of the two larger communities. School boards, impervious to more direct attacks, have opened their gates to the Greeks bearing gifts: plans have been recast, buildings renovated, curriculums revised, qualified teachers hired, tedious reports completed and filed.

The persuasive force of money has also had its effect upon the local citizenry. Republicans for generations, they became Democrats for a time under the generosity of the New Deal. The formula, of course, is not quite so simple; a change in local temper cannot always be brought about merely by turning on and off the financial spigot, nor is the change necessarily permanent. In critical periods the community will orient itself toward financial power, but its pride of independence is soon reasserted. In April 1937, when the depression seemed to have run its course, the Mankato Free Press reprinted pictures of earlier NRA parades with the telling comment: "These scenes were taken on Mankato streets in the summer of '33 as Mankato business firms joined in an NRA parade as an expression of their support of the emergency National Recovery Act. The Depression was on in that year and merchants were grasping at every suggestion which might lead to 'better times.'" New Deal agencies were considered temporary stopgaps to be removed at the first sign of recovery, and the fear was growing that there would be a permanent federal "bureaucracy." By 1940, Blue Earth County was again voting Republican.

This all demonstrates that money is at the heart of the governmental process, and that a study of finance cannot be looked upon as a mere collection of statistics.

#### FINANCIAL REPORTING IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY

If the importance of money in community government is clear, the details of its use are not. Revenues and expenditures are lost in the welter of independent units and agencies, and the whole system of finance represents a triumph of obfuscation.

The principal source of confusion lies in the absence of uniformity: when statistics are available they are seldom comparable. There is first of all a wide variation in the use of fiscal years. Federal and state governments and the local school districts base their reports on the period between July 1 and June 30; the county and most villages and townships use the calendar year; while the two cities, Mankato and Lake Crystal, close their books on the second Tuesday in April.

There is even less standardization in the procedures of accounting and reporting. Townships do not publish annual reports. For their constituents, it is enough that

financial matters be openly discussed and decided at the annual meeting. Anyone interested in recalling expenditures of previous years can drop over to visit the town clerk of an evening. The records will be intelligible if the clerk has been earnest about his work and has a round, firm style of penmanship. Items are phrased spontaneously and conform only by accident to more sophisticated modes of accounting—a few excerpts from several township records will illustrate the point:

<u>Garden City Township</u>	<u>(1929)</u>	<u>Lyra Township</u>	<u>(1936)</u>
Work on Road.....	\$ 2.50	Filling Washout.....	\$20.00
Township Blanks.....	2.58	Weed Inspector.....	37.00
Painting Guard Rails.	11.50	Election.....	10.40
Cleaning Brush.....	11.35	Patrol Road.....	44.25
Cutting Willows.....	8.40	Dragging.....	3.65
Hall Rent.....	15.00	Plowing.....	70.00
Marshal.....	3.00	Packing in Culverts.	17.20
Interest on orders...	432.53	To L. J. Thompson...	1.75

The saving feature, from the point of view of research at least, is that the township's finances are cleared through the county auditor's and treasurer's offices. From their records, one is able to obtain figures on total revenue from taxes, analyzed into the three types of levies: general revenue, road and bridge, and the compulsory one-mill road dragging tax imposed by the county auditor. However, one will not find a detailed analysis of expenditures or a listing of supplementary receipts from fines, licenses, and special levies.

The same lack of sophistication is evident in the records of the smaller villages, a point which can be illustrated by sample items taken from 1945 financial accounts:

<u>Amboy</u>		<u>Madison Lake</u>	
Stamps.....	\$ 2.00	Sal'y. Marshal & St. Com....	\$ 74.30
Justice & Assrs. Bond.	10.00	Tuning Piano in Hall.....	4.00
30 gallons oil.....	23.03	Col. Int. Rev. Victory Tax...	8.46
Welding.....	1.00	Josie Johnson Sounding Siren.	1.00
Salary less tax.....	119.80	Pub. Annual Report.....	162.90
Resealing Streets....	6,096.86	Plowing Snow.....	19.50
Rent of Rest Rooms....	72.00	Josie Johnson Sounding Siren.	1.00
11 Men at fire.....	11.00	Bartender's Salary.....	123.80
Dig & Open Manholes...	39.75	Zinc for under Stove.....	1.50
War Bonds Series F....	11,100.00	Whiskey.....	181.55 <sup>1</sup>

There are, however, several features of village record-keeping that represent distinct improvements over township reporting. In the first place, the villages publish annual operating statements and balance sheets in their local newspapers. In preparation for this annual release, all the loosely organized items of the sort noted above are classified under major headings, and current, capital, and utility accounts are segregated. Second, under Chapter 431 of the Minnesota Reorganization Act of 1939, all villages are canvassed annually by the public examiner and asked to submit operating data on a prescribed standard form. One or two villages usually fail to report (Madison Lake is a chronic example). The records then published by the examiner provide the uniform coverage lacking at the local level.

<sup>1</sup>Lest there be any misapprehension about the whiskey item—the spirits are purchased for sale by the village (municipal) liquor store. There is no separate "utility" account at this stage.

A somewhat more professional touch is found in the recording procedures of the larger villages and the two cities. Local newspapers are still used to report annual statistics, and the small-town flavor is evident in such items as "old iron sold . . . \$8.25" (Lake Crystal, 1945), but the accounts of both cities are kept by regularly employed clerks and are subject to commercial audit. Whatever uniformity they lack is supplied in the annual reports of the public examiner—for those years, at least, when Lake Crystal chooses to comply. Twice between 1938 and 1945, that city has failed to report its financial operations.

School accounts are more uniformly recorded and more rigorously supervised than those of towns, villages, and cities. This has been true since the Civil War, and is due to the fact that a large share of school revenues—12 per cent in 1866 and 60 per cent in 1942—is composed of state, and to a much lesser degree, federal funds. Full and uniform reports for the common school districts are available through the county superintendent's office and from the state department of education for all districts. Statistics reported by the public examiner and the United States Census Bureau are taken from the records of the state department of education.

The county is as closely circumscribed in its financial position as are the school districts. Its officers are checked at every step by statutory provisions, and its records are subject to annual audit by the state. A general audit of county records is conducted annually by the public examiner. Individual accounts are examined by the several agencies involved: game and fish license accounts by the department of conservation, welfare funds by examiners from the division of social welfare, etc.

All this does not mean, however, that county reports are widely circulated or presented in lucid fashion. Though printed, they are not generally distributed; though closely supervised, they are masterpieces of complication. Only the thoroughly initiated can find their way through the intricacies of funds, refunds, accounts, and transfers to gain an accurate picture of county finance. For the layman, it is a matter of glancing idly over long columns of figures, and being roused to occasional interest by noting that some acquaintance was lucky enough to get a wolf bounty or unlucky enough to wind up on the list of poor relief recipients. It might be added that the refusal of the Social Security Board to allow the names of OAA and ADC recipients to be published detracted in no small degree from the interest value of the county report and came as a blow to those wont to follow the financial fortunes of their acquaintances and neighbors.

The obscurity of county reporting destroys the best single opportunity citizens have of obtaining an integrated picture of local finance. Under existing arrangements, the county serves as a clearinghouse not only for the tax receipts of all local units but also for most intergovernmental and interagency transactions. The county auditor is responsible for preparing the over-all tax levy—the cumulative total of town, city, village, school, county, and state assessments as they relate to individual property owners—and for distributing the tax yields when received.<sup>2</sup> Further, all state aids, federal aids, and shared taxes are channeled through the county and thence distributed to the receiving units. It is difficult enough to locate these transactions in the county report as now constructed; but when found, they are further obscured by the practice of lumping allotments under "townships, cities, and villages," without further breakdown and without showing clearly how they were finally used.

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<sup>2</sup>All taxes, once levied, are payable to the county treasurer. There are a few exceptions—special assessments, for example, may be paid directly to the finance officers of the city, town, or village.



Without certain state and federal reports, the task of assembling data on local government finance would be a more tedious one than it is. The most comprehensive and valuable of these reports are those published annually since 1938 by the state public examiner.<sup>3</sup> Though hindered by a reluctant legislature and by the very immensity of the job, the examiner's department has been able to demonstrate the possibility of a uniform system of accounting for all local units. The project has shown several limitations (time lag of several years in publishing, incomplete coverage, and lack of complete correspondence with similar figures reported by the Division of State and Local Government in the United States Bureau of the Census), and by 1945 had been reduced to a survey of city and village statistics. But it stands with the census reports as the only integrated picture of local government finance.<sup>4</sup>

There are, then, two methods of obtaining data on local government finance in Blue Earth County—one, by scouring the reports of the United States Census Bureau, the Minnesota public examiner, and other state agencies;<sup>5</sup> the other, by abstracting, finding, and correlating the separate accounts of 155 local units. Neither is a simple method, but both are at least within the realm of possibility.

As much cannot be said for existing methods of reporting on a county basis the financial operations of state and federal governments. Here, it is a matter of getting in touch with each separate agency in the hope of finding revenues and expenditures distributed on a county basis. There are a few agencies which justify that hope: the state highway department, the state department of taxation, AAA, FSA, and other federal credit agencies. There are a great many more, however, which would find it

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<sup>3</sup>The development of the office of public examiner is an interesting chapter in the history of state-local relations and one that remains to be written. By provision of the original act creating the office in 1878, the examiner was made responsible for ordering and enforcing "a correct, and as far as practicable, uniform system of bookkeeping by state and county treasurers and auditors, so as to afford a suitable check upon their mutual action, and insure the thorough supervision and safety of state and county funds." (Chapter 6, Section 91, General Statutes, General Statutes 1879, Young's Revision.) In 1925, Minnesota's first Reorganization Act transferred the responsibility to the state comptroller; the second Reorganization Act in 1939 returned the charge to the examiner, this time making him responsible for collecting data annually from all units of local government upon forms he was to prescribe. (Chapter 431, Article 4, Laws of 1939.) Despite the generous terms of the act, the examiner's work has been a rough, uphill fight. With tongue in cheek, the 1939 legislature passed the measure without adding an appropriation; the next legislature amended the act to exempt townships from the reporting process. For several years, the examiner was able to rely upon help from WPA and the Minnesota resources commission, but by 1945, his reports had been curtailed to include only the cities and villages.

<sup>4</sup>It does not help that local units the size of those found in Blue Earth County are not covered by the Census Bureau except in its decennial reports.

<sup>5</sup>Minnesota State Auditor's Reports (1866-1938), Minnesota state tax commission reports (1908-38), and Minnesota department of taxation (1939 to date) for the distribution of general property tax levies among the various local units in the county; the auditor's reports for detailed listings of supplementary revenues accruing to local units (grants, shared taxes, and reimbursements); the state department of education reports for data on school district finance. Special mention should also be made of the various articles appearing in the reports of the state tax commission, particularly the one by Dr. E. V. Robinson on the "Cost of Government in Minnesota" (1911, pp. 245-569). The article was based on extensive original coverage of local units, and gave first promise of the work later accomplished by the public examiners.

impossible or impracticable to segregate the costs of operation in one county: the dairy and food inspector of the state department of agriculture, whose territory embraces seven counties, could not be expected to report a prorated amount representing the cost of his work in the Blue Earth area. Even if such prorating were possible and agencies did report in such a convenient manner, the data would still have to be collected in some central place. Data are now scattered through the annual reports of the various agencies, and the community is unaware that such organizations even exist, much less that they issue reports.

One cannot be surprised, therefore, that the county auditor, the state commissioner of administration, and the staff members of the United States Bureau of the Budget reacted coldly to the suggestion that a "community budget" be devised, showing all revenues and disbursements of government on a county basis.<sup>6</sup> None of them thought it possible; and the facts of the present system of reporting support their judgment.

Nevertheless, a determined attempt will be made in the succeeding sections to encompass the entire area of government finance within Blue Earth County. At the point where the figures become estimates, they should be taken as such, and tolerance should be shown toward the gaping holes in the data presented. Once more, what is important is the attempt to see government whole.

#### THE HISTORY OF GOVERNMENT FINANCE IN THE COUNTY

In its broad outlines, the history of government finance is a familiar one: essentially, it is a story of growth in which war, the rise of public education, the introduction of rapid means of transit and communication, the Christian ethic, and the cumulative influences of a market economy have been the motivating factors. It is within this framework that the experience of Blue Earth County must be read and interpreted. Settled at a time when the "administrative state" was just coming into being, Blue Earth was never allowed to enjoy the golden years of local autonomy, if indeed there ever were such years anywhere. Its local units began to lean upon state aid within the first years of their existence, and would have been pressed much harder financially than they were had they been forced to supply the road, military, postal, and educational services then being provided by state and federal governments.

Though certain functions such as education continued after the Civil War to draw more and more heavily upon state and local revenues, and though government at all levels continued to expand steadily (see Tables 13 and 14), the full sweep of modern government was not felt until the turn of the century. Blue Earth felt the first effects between 1900 and 1911; local property taxes increased nearly 60 per cent; state grants, shared taxes, and reimbursements more than doubled; and state agencies began operating in the community on a broad scale.

But the decade of 1911-21 stands as the great period of growth, the basic factors in the case of state and local units being the increased expenditures for roads and schools,<sup>7</sup> and in the case of the federal government, the costs of the war. Between 1916 and 1921, federal revenues from the state jumped from \$4.22 to \$31.55 per capita (\$9.5 to \$77.8 millions)—an increase of 714 per cent. Between 1911 and 1921, state revenues increased from \$16.26 to \$45.26 per capita (\$33.7 to \$108 millions), an increase of nearly 300 per cent.

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<sup>6</sup>The proposal was incorporated in Democracy Trains Its Microscope on Government in Blue Earth County (Mankato, Minn.: Council on Intergovernmental Relations, 1945).

<sup>7</sup>No allowance has been made for price rises. Actually, inflation is responsible for a significant share of the increase.

TABLE 13. DISPOSITION OF THE GENERAL PROPERTY TAX IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY

	1866	1877	1887	1899	1911	1921
Total assessed value, real and personal.....	\$2,604,768	\$6,798,878	\$8,680,604	\$11,782,728	\$12,847,551	\$29,199,875
Total average tax rate (in mills).....	28	16	21	20.3	29.8	42.9
Total taxes levied*.....	76,941.34	109,898.06	186,058.65	235,143.12	383,273.57	1,310,541.40
Total state share.....	\$18,233.32	\$13,597.84	\$25,173.61	\$35,910.86	\$ 62,091.86	\$123,850.48
Revenue.....	10,419.04		16,493.00	20,030.41	34,069.07	57,274.80
Debt.....	5,209.52			1,387.69	12,209.58	
Roads and bridges.....						29,199.88
Education.....	2,604.76		8,680.61	14,492.76	15,813.21	37,375.80
Total county share.....	15,628.56	25,155.94	24,306.67	62,094.95	76,109.04	253,163.05
Revenue.....	13,023.80	21,076.63	17,361.21	37,704.73	44,354.07	84,679.62
Debt.....			1,736.10			
Roads and bridges.....						148,919.36
Poor.....	2,604.76	4,079.31	5,209.36	11,782.74	25,712.52	
Total township share.....	16,421.38	9,341.20	14,518.57	12,607.48	6,042.45	19,563.87
Revenue.....	6,514.47	4,479.03	9,671.54	18,485.11	36,787.16	117,592.68
Debt.....			2,297.64	15,119.76	31,632.47	27,690.79
Roads and bridges.....	4,227.83	4,862.17	2,619.39	2,273.07	2,578.91	20,117.27
Other (bounties, etc.).....	5,679.08			1,092.28	2,575.78	69,784.62
Total city and village share.....	8,221.47	10,760.07	33,317.14	47,442.32	87,566.45	234,338.10
Revenue.....	6,328.44		31,089.50		87,347.60	
Debt.....			2,227.64		218.85	
Roads and bridges.....						
Other.....	1,893.03					
Total school district share.....	18,436.61	37,087.80	59,546.52	67,059.29	109,984.88	523,226.58
Revenue.....	15,831.85	30,288.90	50,363.46	55,276.51	97,128.61	468,976.19
Debt.....			502.46			25,050.49
Local one-mill levy.....	2,604.76	6,798.90	8,680.60	11,782.78	12,856.27	29,199.90
Special assessments.....		13,955.21	29,196.14	4,150.69	10,734.18	58,370.71
County.....		7,478.76	19,097.28		3,439.43	51,669.16
Townships.....				135.00		
Cities and villages.....		6,476.45	10,098.86	4,015.69	7,294.75	6,701.55
Percentages of total tax†						
State.....	23.7%	12.4%	13.5%	15.3%	16.2%	9.4%
County.....	20.3	29.7	23.5	26.4	21.0	23.2
Townships.....	21.4	8.5	7.9	7.9	9.9	9.0
Cities and villages.....	10.7	15.7	23.4	21.9	24.8	18.4
School districts.....	23.9	33.7	31.7	28.5	29.1	40.0



TABLE 13. CONTINUED

	1929	1933	1938	1942	1946
Total assessed value, real and personal....	\$27,633,616	\$22,008,443	\$19,042,369	\$19,103,184	\$20,214,662
Total average tax rate (in mills).....	54.5	50.8	62	65	76
Total taxes levied*.....	1,596,326.12	1,177,686.54	1,220,750.00	1,246,468.00	1,543,146.00
Total state share.....	\$177,064.60	\$243,608.49	\$185,415.00	\$139,997.00	\$138,735.00
Revenue.....	115,160.93	191,228.41	146,556.00	112,327.00	113,165.00
Debt.....	27,633.62	22,008.44	15,606.00		
Roads and bridges.....	34,271.05	30,371.64	23,253.00	27,670.00	25,570.00
Education.....	348,798.16	224,958.42	306,627.00	289,604.00	350,321.00
Total county share.....	100,095.62	86,305.23	191,611.00	209,753.00	250,258.00
Revenue.....			35,038.00		
Debt.....	201,725.38	39,615.20	79,978.00	79,851.00	100,063.00
Roads and bridges.....	46,977.16	99,037.99			
Poor.....	120,342.73	57,046.94	109,129.00	122,873.00	130,257.00
Total township share.....	37,229.86	22,526.57	45,843.00	21,873.00	26,845.00
Revenue.....		22.95			
Debt.....	83,112.87	34,497.42	63,286.00	101,000.00	103,412.00
Roads and bridges.....					
Other (bounties, etc.).....					
Total city and village share.....	291,685.20	194,807.88	248,421.00	235,347.00	327,167.00
Revenue.....	290,881.36	193,780.97	247,334.00		
Debt.....		1,087.00			
Roads and bridges.....	803.84				
Other.....					
Total school district share.....	571,450.98	402,618.80	371,158.00	397,246.00	596,666.00
Revenue.....	500,316.88	299,100.32	326,301.00		
Debt.....	43,500.47	81,510.02	25,815.00		
Local one-mill levy.....	27,633.63	22,008.46	19,042.00		
Special assessments.....	85,873.45	54,646.11	35,665.00	61,419.00	*
County.....	65,792.33	38,814.28	29,581.00	61,419.00	
Townships.....					
Cities and villages.....	20,081.12	15,831.83	5,084.00		
Percentages of total tax †					
State.....	11.3%	20.9%	15.0%	12.0%	9.0%
County.....	25.6	22.6	25.6	28.0	22.6
Townships.....	7.6	4.9	8.7	9.7	8.4
Cities and villages.....	19.6	17.9	20.6	18.7	21.1
School districts.....	35.9	33.7	30.1	31.6	38.9

Sources: State Auditor's Reports (1866-1933); State Tax Commission Reports (1938-1946).

\* Included in city and village share.

† Including special assessments.

TABLE 14. REIMBURSEMENTS, GRANTS, AND SHARED REVENUES ACCRUING TO UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY

Item	1866	1877	1887	1899	1911	1921	1929	1933	1937	1942	1945
<b>General government</b>											
Share, money and credits tax					\$ 628.00	\$ 1,825.15	\$ 1,733.40	\$ 1,424.09	\$ 2,900.26	\$ 3,100.00	\$ 3,658.27
County.....					1,256.00	3,650.30	3,466.80	2,848.18	5,800.52	6,200.00	7,316.54
Towns, cities, and villages.....											
Share, mortgage registry tax					1,006.19	1,229.07	655.83	205.06	1,447.04	639.01	989.08
County.....					2,012.38	2,458.14	1,311.66	410.12	2,894.08	1,278.05	1,978.06
Towns, cities, and villages.....											
Share, cigarette licenses											
County.....						88.00	253.00			313.00	348.00
Town.....						771.00	1,425.00	1,820.70		331.90	307.80
County share, inheritance tax.....					29.85	894.72	981.88	311.87	807.54	1,768.43	3,966.60
County share, REA tax.....										69.02	82.10
County share, nomination fees.....					9.09		2.30			69.34	10,651.89
Municipal share, bank excise.....											
<b>Agriculture and conservation</b>											
Reimbursement to county, wolf bounty.....				\$ 20.00	22.50	15.00	84.00		75.00	15.00	1,080.75
Reimbursement to county, tree planting bounty.....				\$ 43.98	962.50			150.00	100.00		
Reimbursement to county, 4-H premiums.....											
<b>Education</b>											
Share, money and credits tax.....					1,256.00	3,650.30	3,466.80	2,848.18	5,800.52	6,200.00	7,316.54
Share, mortgage registry tax.....					2,012.38	2,458.14	1,311.66	410.12	2,894.08	1,278.05	1,978.06
Share, REA tax.....										69.02	82.11
Share, power and light tax.....							1,444.00	3,586.00	2,634.00	2,208.05	3,033.15
Income tax apportionment.....									50,740.10	93,860.00	61,086.00
School fund apportionment.....									39,638.47	45,586.44	48,572.36
State aid.....									79,361.01	112,640.73	117,932.81
Reimbursement for evening classes expenditures.....											
Aid to school libraries.....											
Other state aid.....											
Federal aid.....											
Federal aid from Smith-Hughes Act.....											
Federal aid from George-Deen Act.....											
PWA.....											
NYA.....											
Other federal aid (school lunch)							816.00	1,675.00	1,374.00		45,135.00
<b>Health</b>											
County reimbursement for town quarantine.....										97.44	69.00
County reimbursement for municipal vital statistics.....										338.15	348.50

TABLE 14. CONTINUED

Item	1866	1877	1887	1899	1911	1921	1929	1933	1937	1942	1945
<b>Highways and public works</b>											
State reimbursement for county bonds and interest.....							12,340.38	19,922.58	28,467.50	22,460.00	15,000.00
State gas tax apportionment.....							15,015.00	48,000.00	72,000.00	71,000.00	63,300.00
State aid, 1905.....					4,682.23	31,275.15	23,379.25	35,946.02	10,715.06	19,648.45	9,754.00
State aid, 1945.....											205.64
Federal aid to highways.....											351.64
Federal aid to engineering.....										817.76	982.26
County aid to towns.....										16,701.78	900.61
Municipal reimbursement to county.....											
PWA grants.....									44,550.00		
<b>Military</b>											
State aid for armory maintenance.....					250.00		373.00				
Reimbursement for burial of soldiers and sailors.....			105.00		722.50	400.00	373.00				
<b>Public safety</b>											
Reimbursement to county for horse thief reward.....			200.00								
Reimbursement for sheriff's expenses.....		189.95	131.78	220.51	105.91		230.54	706.79	449.78		
Municipal share of insurance premiums tax.....			319.89	460.40	1,544.41		2,857.37	2,600.52	2,318.25		
Reimbursement to county for jail expense											
Federal.....										9.00	26.00
Other units.....										511.95	220.00
<b>Relief and welfare</b>											
Aid to dependent children											
Federal.....										15,463.82	12,255.96
State.....										9,653.88	8,285.97
Old age assistance											
Federal.....											
State.....									85,011.10	107,725.77	125,242.15
State aid for county direct relief.....									54,587.74	69,961.18	81,340.26
Reimbursement to county for care of dependent children..									11,302.55	4,323.88	
County.....									914.44	1,038.56	870.16
Total supplementary income*.....									511,152.32	619,910.46	628,347.27
County.....	3,000.00	7,500.00	10,921.40	23,493.50	56,915.24	107,180.73	188,223.74	250,759.05	270,578.01	348,763.87	318,377.19
Towns.....	173.00	300.00	580.76	953.60	8,418.77	35,932.09	55,068.58	106,741.41	270,578.01	348,763.87	318,377.19
Cities and villages.....		200.00	319.89	460.40	1,056.00	2,321.00	2,836.66	2,931.00	4,300.52	3,405.25	3,987.56
School districts.....	2,837.00	7,000.00	10,020.75	22,079.90	43,220.68	7,128.44	6,795.53	5,548.70	53,562.33	5,878.05	17,846.49
						61,799.20	123,522.97	135,537.94	182,711.46	264,863.29	288,136.03

Source: Annual reports of state and county auditors.

\*Reported items plus estimates of figures not available.



Local government in Blue Earth followed the same pattern: general property tax revenues for all local units jumped approximately 300 per cent between 1911 and 1921, while supplementary revenues derived from grants, shared taxes, and reimbursements approximately doubled. The greatest increase was recorded by the school districts, whose receipts climbed from \$150,000 to \$580,000, most of it financed by the local property tax.

Blue Earth, once caught in the larger sweep of the times, added impetus of its own to the movement. School expenditures were increased by 400 per cent, as compared to a statewide gain of 237 per cent. Similarly in the case of roads: county receipts were expanded by 600 per cent, township receipts by more than 1500 per cent, and city and village income by about 50 per cent. State wide, the increase amounted to 465 per cent.

The next great movement in government finance was the familiar one of the depression. Again functions were expanded, and the over-all costs of government increased. But this time it was the federal government rather than state and local units which stepped in to carry the load. While total government expenditures increased over the period 1933-41, revenue contributions of state and particularly local units dipped sharply at the onset of the depression and only gradually worked their way back to their earlier levels.<sup>8</sup> The difference was supplied by the federal government.

What was occurring locally in Blue Earth County is shown in part by Tables 13 and 14. When the depression set in, there were sharp cutbacks in the property tax levies of all classes of local units; yet total income was kept approximately constant by the sudden expansion of state and federal aids. The figures listed in the tables do not tell the whole story, however. They include only part of the emergency federal grants to local units<sup>9</sup> and wholly exclude the tremendous sums which the state government and especially the federal government channeled directly into the community—AAA benefits, highway and grade crossing improvements, resettlement grants, soldiers' bonuses, and administrative costs of other programs.

By 1941, the long-run implications of the new system of finance were clear. The New Deal, welcomed at first by the community as a temporary device to support a flagging economy and later resisted as an intrusion upon the local domain, was essentially the nation's first conscious and systematic effort as one polity to discharge its responsibilities in internal affairs. For too long the federal government had been considered the guardian of the nation from external attack, the department of foreign affairs in a system dependent upon state and local units for its domestic welfare. The responsibility of the nation for handling many internal national problems and functions had devolved upon instruments which could not be expected to fulfill them permanently and alone.

Thus, by way of the depression, two major readjustments were accomplished: first, local government was given the relief it needed to carry on effectively in its

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<sup>8</sup>For local data, see Tables 13, 14, and 15. The total revenue collected by the state for state purposes in Minnesota dropped to \$21.23 per capita in 1932, but had climbed back to \$38.04 per capita in 1941. (Washington, D.C.: United States Census Bureau, Financing Federal, State and Local Governments: 1941.)

<sup>9</sup>Chief omissions are expenditures under the Emergency Relief Administration and Public Works programs. Total FERA payments in Blue Earth County during the two and one-half years of operation (April 1933 to December 1935) amounted to \$160,093. To this, the state added \$13,796 and the county \$59,161. (Washington, D.C.: Federal Emergency Relief Administration, Final Statistical Report, 1942.) Total WPA and PWA expenditures in the community have not been reported.

expanding role; second, the community was forced to a realization that its governmental life was bound up with that of the rest of the nation. The financial side of these adjustments will be analyzed in the following sections.

### EXPENDITURES

Governmental expenditures within the community can be reduced to four varieties: expenditures by local units financed from local sources of revenue; expenditures by local units financed by state and federal funds (including grants, shared taxes, and reimbursements); expenditures made directly by central governments through administrative agencies; and expenditures made directly by central governments through quasi-governmental and private organizations (agricultural societies, fair associations, etc.).

Table 15 shows the tremendous increases that have taken place in the expenditures of local units.<sup>10</sup> From approximately \$60,000 in 1866, the total outlay of all local units had advanced to nearly \$2 million in 1945—a rise of more than 3000 per cent, without taking account of the changes in the value of the dollar. Over 40 per cent of the total in 1945 was dedicated to schools; approximately 20 per cent to highways, roads, and streets; and another 20 per cent to welfare and relief. These were also the three great aided functions: grants-in-aid, shared taxes, and reimbursements accounted for one third of the total expenditures for school purposes;<sup>11</sup> slightly more than one fourth of the total outlay for roads, bridges, and streets (roughly \$90,000 in aids as against \$350,000 in total outlay); and about three fifths of the total expenditures for welfare and relief (\$228,000 as against \$354,375).

The total share of the central governments amounted to something over \$600,000. State and federal governments, in other words, were financing one third of the total costs of local government. One fourth of this amount was contributed by the federal

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<sup>10</sup>Tables 13 and 14 show revenue rather than expenditures. The figures have been used interchangeably in the discussion, principally because there is no substantial difference in the long run between income and outlay, and because the discussion itself is intended to be only approximate.

<sup>11</sup>In the process of computing this percentage, at least two of the problems involved in constructing a picture of local finance are made evident: (1) How broadly should the function be considered? If considered as "education," the figures should include cost of city and county libraries, county agents' expenses, etc.; if merely as "schools" then only the reported expenditures of the various districts should be brought into account. Happily, in this instance, the variation would not be significant. If we assume the broader definition, the percentage of aids to outlay would be 32.5 per cent (\$284,965 as against total receipts of \$853,197); if we assume the narrower view, 33.5 per cent (approximately \$30,000 less total cost with no reduction in aids). (2) What figures should be used? Those reported above are taken from reports of the county and state auditors. Since they represent actual transactions taken from recorded vouchers, they would seem to be more accurate than a second available set of figures published by the income tax division of the state department of taxation (Tax Statistics Bulletin—annual publication). The figures reported by the division for 1945 give the total revenue of all school districts from all sources as \$844,556, nearly \$10,000 less than that reported by the county auditor. The difference obviously lies in the variation in fiscal years, the county using the calendar year, the state the period between July 1 and June 30. The explanation may be simple; the problem of reporting is not.

TABLE 15. CLASSIFICATION OF DISBURSEMENTS AND RECEIPTS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL UNITS IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY

Item	County				Towns			
	1911	1931	1938	1942	1911	1931	1938	1942
Total revenue receipts.....	\$ 96,225.00	\$574,000.00	\$ 706,853.00	\$ 735,321.00	\$37,696.00	\$116,000.00	\$110,869.00	\$116,162.00
Real and personal property taxes.....	84,105.00	312,000.00	323,410.00	313,665.00	37,696.00	111,000.00	110,869.00	114,484.00
Special assessments.....	3,863.00	121,000.00	48,379.00	61,419.00				
Licenses, permits, fines, etc.....	1,590.00	45,000.00	1,011.00	1,241.00				
Interests and rents.....	150.00	3,000.00	1,439.00	150.00				
Departmental earnings.....	1,773.00	13,000.00	16,978.00	34,141.00		3,000.00		
Contributions from utility funds.....								
Revenue from other agencies.....	4,744.00	80,000.00	315,636.00	323,148.00		1,000.00		1,678.00
All other revenue.....				1,557.00		1,000.00		
Total non-revenue receipts.....	329,888.00	. . . \$	1,359,068.00	177,976.00	. . .	. . .	1,270.00	. . .
Capital outlay borrowing.....	9,804.00		68,002.00				1,270.00	
Short-term borrowing.....				50,000.00				
Agency, trust, and investments.....	320,084.00		1,238,480.00	118,041.00				
Miscellaneous.....			52,586.00	9,935.00				
Total utility receipts.....								
Revenue from taxes, government.....								
Sales and earnings.....								
Borrowing.....								
Total current expenditures.....	\$ 67,041.00	\$316,000.00	\$ 476,202.00	\$ 540,238.00	\$37,696.00	\$ 93,000.00	\$ 76,130.00	\$116,162.00
General government.....		65,000.00	55,506.00	60,339.00			11,547.00	18,626.78
Public safety.....		8,000.00	6,373.00	5,655.00			279.00	
Highways.....	30,395.00	79,000.00	101,531.00	122,628.00			62,816.00	95,858.00
Sanitation and waste removal.....		1,000.00**	1,775.00	1,441.00			496.00	
Health and hospitals.....			10,231.00	16,034.00			174.00	
Charities and welfare.....		67,000.00	248,933.00	286,085.00				
Schools and libraries.....		4,000.00	3,613.00	11,674.00				
Recreation.....		2,000.00	251.00	1,283.00				
Corrections.....			5,318.00					
Conservation of natural resources.....			6,040.00	14,187.00				
Interest payments.....	1,555.00	72,000.00	36,612.00	15,718.00		1,000.00	818.00	
Contribution to utility funds.....								
Miscellaneous.....		18,000.00		352.00				
Capital outlay.....	35,963.00	159,000.00	91,719.00	65,928.00		10,000.00	33,677.00	
Debt redemption.....	6,750.00		173,200.00	154,700.00			2,327.00	
Agency, trust, and investment payments....	318,299.00		174,442.00	1,175,929.00				
Miscellaneous payments.....			47,037.00	9,935.00				
Utility disbursements.....								
Contribution to government funds.....								
Operation and maintenance.....								
Debt redemption and capital outlay....								



TABLE 15. CONTINUED

Item	Cities and Villages				School Districts			
	1911*	1931	1938†	1942†	1911	1931	1938	1942
Total revenue receipts.....	\$172,099.00	\$384,000.00	\$336,162.00	\$386,493.00	\$164,739.00	\$663,000.00	\$537,148.00	\$796,167.00
Real and personal property taxes.....	75,790.18	272,000.00	233,417.00	228,849.00	117,738.00	511,000.00	349,781.00	581,300.00
Special assessments.....	39,502.00	49,000.00	25,092.00	13,464.00				
Licenses, permits, fines, etc.....	36,040.00	10,000.00	27,858.00	21,658.00				
Interests and rents.....		3,000.00	1,310.00	2,717.00				
Departmental earnings.....	7,110.00	50,000.00†	12,896.00	12,819.00		20,000.00	2,046.00	
Contributions from utility funds.....			32,522.68	94,371.00				
Revenue from other agencies.....	13,577.00		3,054.32	5,455.00	47,001.00	132,000.00	171,470.00	205,421.00
All other revenue.....	80.00		22.00	17,160.00			13,851.00	9,446.00
Total non-revenue receipts.....	65,401.00			3,117.00			12,253.34	17,843.00
Capital outlay borrowing.....	65,401.00			1,567.00			3,529.00	8,080.00
Short-term borrowing.....				1,567.00				
Agency, trust, and investments.....				957.00				
Miscellaneous.....				36.00			8,724.34	9,763.00
Total utility receipts.....	16,762.00	47,000.00	189,037.00	303,997.00				
Revenue from taxes, government.....			5,491.00	70,299.00				
Sales and earnings.....	16,762.00		183,546.00	233,698.00				
Borrowing.....								
Total current expenditures.....	\$113,492.00	\$249,000.00	\$249,741.00	\$365,837.00		\$565,000.00	\$502,845.00	\$625,950.00
General government.....	38,136.00		37,821.60	34,340.00				
Public safety.....			74,533.00	88,321.00				
Highways.....	53,173.00		72,952.40	99,087.00				
Sanitation and waste removal.....	1,962.00		2,164.00	7,412.00				
Health and hospitals.....			8,487.00	11,795.00				
Charities and welfare.....								
Schools and libraries.....	4,543.00		10,257.00	10,986.00	523,000.00			
Recreation.....	6,855.00		22,745.00	29,342.00				
Corrections.....								
Conservation of natural resources.....								
Interest payments.....	8,823.00	14,000.00	1,569.00	1,890.00		42,000.00	18,990.00	5,898.00
Contribution to utility funds.....			5,345.00	70,299.00				
Miscellaneous.....			13,867.00	10,365.00				
Capital outlay.....		37,000.00	19,231.00	17,186.00		54,000.00	12,219.00	12,700.00
Debt redemption.....	117,820.00		38,218.00	11,040.00			47,780.00	210,415.00
Agency, trust, and investment payments.....	725.00		10,000.00	25,951.00				
Miscellaneous payments.....			19,946.00	9,610.00				
Utility disbursements.....	21,759.00	41,000.00	222,823.00	306,708.00				
Contribution to government funds.....			32,523.00	94,371.00				
Operation and maintenance.....	11,433.00		129,236.00	197,718.00				
Debt redemption and capital outlay.....	10,326.00		61,064.00	14,619.00				

Sources: County Auditor's Records; Minnesota State Tax Commission Reports (especially 1911); Minnesota public examiner (1938, 1942); United States Census Bureau (1931: Wealth, Debt, and Taxation).

\*Does not include Amboy, St. Clair, and Eagle Lake.

†Does not include Madison Lake and Lake Crystal.

‡Departmental earnings and contributions from utility funds were not reported separately in 1931.

§No breakdown available.

\*\*Sanitation and waste removal, health and hospitals, and charities and welfare were not reported separately in 1931.

government;<sup>12</sup> the remainder came from state grants, shared taxes, and reimbursements.

For reasons explained earlier, the direct expenditures of state and federal governments are more difficult to isolate. Some indication can be gained by referring to known items. State expenditures in Blue Earth County in 1945 are given in the accompanying tabulation. To the total amount shown should be added the following expenditures: prorated expenses for inspectors, epidemiologists, case workers with children,

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
District judge, salary and expenses.....	\$ 6,000
Mankato State Teachers College.....	215,878
Share, county indigents at general hospital.....	2,000
Minneopa state park.....	2,500
Aid, County Agricultural Society.....	1,700
Aid, Mankato Fair Association.....	1,700
Aid, Blue Earth County Poultry Association.....	350
Trunk Highway Expenditures.....	<u>150,000</u>
Approximate known total.....	\$380,128

mothers, and the blind, etc.; cost of care of Blue Earth County patients in the various state institutions, aid to the blind (state share), indemnities for diseased cattle slaughtered by the state, soldiers' bonuses, care of veterans; and the state share of county agent's salary (paid directly to the agent and not routed through the county's books).

It is impossible to determine the exact amount. But it seems reasonable to conclude that the state spends annually within Blue Earth County—or in such a way as to affect the county directly—well over \$500,000.

Direct expenditures by the federal government are far more difficult to trace, but the amount is clearly greater than that of the state. AAA benefits alone generally exceed \$250,000 and have ranged as high as \$500,000.<sup>13</sup> Highway payments were cut short during the war period, but can be expected to add another \$100,000 annually when construction is resumed. There is no way of determining the total costs of the remaining federal activities: (1) Operational expenses of the thirteen local post offices and of the various credit agencies, inspectorates, auditors, and agricultural action programs. (2) Soldiers' bonuses, GI payments, hospitalization of veterans, Emergency Maternal and Infant Care benefits, costs of National Guard equipment and training. (3) Expenditures through state agencies: Navy Cadet Training Program at the Mankato State Teachers College; support of state health work, including the financing of district unit No. 2; aid to the blind; partial support of the county agent program;

<sup>12</sup>Federal aids are primarily those distributed under the Old Age Assistance and Aid to Dependent Children programs (\$137,500), but also include funds directed to the Mankato school district for support of the vocational education project, to the county for engineering costs, and to the school districts for school-lunch and penny-milk programs.

<sup>13</sup>Conservation payments decreased from \$471,445 in 1941 to \$133,498 in 1945; sugar beet payments from \$35,084 to \$12,578. To these amounts should be added portions of the total dairy, sheep, and beef subsidies of \$1,201,781 reported by the county AAA office as having been paid out. No annual analyses were made available from the beginning of the war through 1945.

crop reporting and market inspection; barberry eradication; animal testing; etc.  
(4) Federal programs discontinued by 1945: NYA, WPA, CCC, PWA. (5) War contracts.<sup>14</sup>

The problem of estimating or even of surveying the range of federal expenditures is a baffling one, and for all practical purposes impossible to solve. If an amount must be named, it seems reasonable to place it well over \$1 million (particularly if it is based on an annual average calculated for the ten-year period 1935-44).

To summarize: state and federal governments finance one third of the cost of local government in Blue Earth County (1945), in addition to which they spend as much within the community as do all local units combined.

### LENDING

The full extent of governmental lending within the community is equally unpublicized and equally revealing. Significantly enough, local government (except for the county's never-used authority to make emergency feed and seed loans) is not active in the process except as a borrower. The state and especially the federal government provide the community with its facilities for governmental credit.

#### Federal Lending within Blue Earth County

##### Rural Electrification Administration

Loans to local REA cooperative: \$870,000 (1937-45). Loans outstanding July 1946: \$671,000.

No re-loans to individuals

##### Electric Home and Farm Authority

Loans to local REA cooperative: \$9510. Completely repaid.

##### Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Section

Total loans, 1933-44: \$20,819. Loans outstanding, January 1944: \$2872.

New loans January-May 1944: \$300.

##### Farm Security Administration

Total loans, 1937-44: \$280,673 (including \$28,287 Rural Rehabilitation funds). Collection record, 1943-44: 85 per cent. New loans, 1944: \$56,180 (24 new, 13 supplementary).

##### National Farm Loan Association Group 227 (figures for eight-county area).

Total loans, 1939-44: \$500,000 (2320 loans). Loans outstanding, 1944: \$139,200.

##### Production Credit Association (figures for five-county area)

Total loans, 1939-44: \$7,500,000. Loans outstanding, 1944: \$7,000,000. New loans, 1944: \$1,500,000.

##### Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation

Total loans, 1943-44: \$300,000 estimated. Loans outstanding, May 1944: \$39,806.14. New loans, spring 1944: \$17,600.

##### Commodity Credit Corporation

Total loans, 1939 (only year made available): 400,000 bushels of corn; 90,000 bushels of wheat.

No information on loans by Bank for Cooperatives (FCA); by Home Owners Loan Corporation; or by the Veterans Administration (GI loans).

<sup>14</sup>Some indications of the sums involved were obtained by canvassing individual agencies: Mankato State Teachers College reported that NYA student-aids were averaging \$1000 per month at the time funds were discontinued, and that the Cadet Training Program added approximately \$60,000 annually to the college budget during the war years. According to figures submitted by the state department of health, the proposed budget for district unit No. 2 for the fiscal year 1946 called for \$11,213 (to be financed entirely from federal grants).



The state's main function in this field is making trust fund loans to local units, primarily the county and the school districts. The loans appear to be of a bookkeeping nature, intended to serve in anticipation of tax and aid receipts. In any one year, loans to units in Blue Earth County may amount to three quarters of a million dollars. In 1937, school districts held \$550,000 and the county \$194,500; in 1942, school districts were credited with \$494,600. The only other state loan program, that of the department of rural credit, had been fully liquidated within the county by 1940. Before its demise, the department had become considerably involved in loans on rural property in the county. In 1929, its total loans outstanding amounted to \$426,300; in 1933, to \$484,700.

Principally, the field has been pre-empted by the federal government. The foregoing list indicates the range and extent of its local activity.

### INSURANCE

In insurance as in lending, local units remain but disinterested spectators—as is evident in the long list of ventures by the state and federal governments into the field of insurance and retirement plans. Crop insurance, deposit insurance, old age and survivors' insurance, and in part unemployment compensation have all been federalized. Teachers insurance and retirement, public employees retirement (covering employees of local units), and unemployment compensation have been placed under state administration.

### REVENUES

Local Government. The development of local revenues in Blue Earth has already been described. The pattern until the depression was one of steady growth in the three basic varieties of income: (1) general property taxes, (2) fines, fees, licenses, departmental and utility earnings, (3) grants, shared taxes, and reimbursements. Since 1929, the development has been somewhat more complex. Property taxes were at first cut sharply, then gradually allowed to return to their former levels. Grants and shared taxes were quickly expanded to fill the gap, and from 1933 to 1943—even with the break upwards in the general tax levy on property—they have continued to increase as a relative share of total revenue receipts. (See Tables 16, 17, and 18 and Figure 11.)

Distributed by classes of local units, the figures become more meaningful. They show that the county from a fiscal point of view has finally assumed the position intended at its creation: it is now as much an organ of central as of local government. Since the advent of the New Deal and the passage of the Social Security Act, approximately half the county's total revenues have been derived from state and federal sources.

Somewhat the same picture appears in the revenue accounts of the school districts. State aids began to flow at an early date. Within recent years, they have amounted to about half what the districts derive from the local property tax, and roughly one third of the total district receipts.

Townships and incorporated places have not been so fortunate: aids from the central governments have constituted less than 5 per cent of total town revenue. But the situation is not quite that bleak: townships do not perform functions of state or national concern, with the exceptions of work on roads and the assessment of property for taxation. The former has been greatly lessened by county absorption of the more heavily traveled routes. Also, the figures for cities and villages include only a few of the emergency grants given during the Roosevelt administration. The one year, 1938, where such figures have been recorded gives a more accurate description of municipal revenues during that period. A final point is that cities and villages are like towns

TABLE 16. COMPOSITE REPORT OF ALL RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS OF ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY DURING 1943

Item	23 Towns	122 School Districts	7 Villages	2 Cities	Blue Earth County	155 Total Units
Taxable value.....	\$11,521,500	\$19,716,334	\$865,489	\$7,329,345	\$19,716,334	\$19,716,334
1942 tax levy, collected in 1943.....	\$96,023	\$384,307	\$18,044	\$234,551	\$300,280	\$1,033,205
Population.....	1,584	36,203	3,390	16,973	36,203	36,203
<b>Receipts</b>						
Real and personal property tax.....	\$98,949	\$403,760	\$21,474	\$246,106	\$325,249	\$1,095,538
Assessments, licenses, and fees.....			3,442	40,687	47,757	91,886
Rents and others.....	278	15,017		710		16,005
Department earnings.....			644	15,142	21,368	37,154
Contributed from utilities.....		69,767	33,256	6,388		109,411
State shared taxes.....				2,089	1,486	3,575
Sub-total.....	\$99,227	\$488,544	\$58,516	\$311,122	\$395,860	\$1,353,569
State aid.....		218,544	249	1,562	184,563	404,918
Federal aid.....		5,070			127,492	132,562
Sub-total.....		\$223,614	\$249	\$1,562	\$312,055	\$537,480
Grand total.....	\$99,227	\$712,158	\$59,065	\$312,684	\$707,915	\$1,891,049
<b>Disbursements</b>						
General government.....	\$15,337		\$ 4,691	\$ 31,630	\$ 52,343	\$104,001
Public safety.....			6,313	92,209	6,038	104,560
Conserving natural resources (county agent, fairs, etc.)...					16,679	16,679
Highways, streets.....	83,612		13,112	74,826	100,989	272,539
Sanitation, weed eradication.....				10,295	2,235	12,530
Health promotion.....			685	3,037	4,196	7,918
Hospitals.....				1,917	9,339	11,256
Institutional care.....					7,783	7,783
Charities						
Direct relief.....					27,172	27,172
OAA.....					208,067	208,067
ADC.....					32,860	32,860
Others.....					15,385	15,385
Schools.....		\$612,736			3,665	616,401
Libraries.....			471	11,272	8,432	20,175
Recreation.....			703	29,462	1,283	31,448
Miscellaneous and unclassified.....	278		1,803	15,114	13,072	30,267
Capital investments.....		7,253	3,097	22,241	18,319	50,910
Debt redemption.....		61,607	29,812	6,129	116,800	214,348
Grand total.....	\$99,227	\$681,596	\$60,687	\$298,132	\$644,657	\$1,784,299

TABLE 17. GRANTS, SHARED TAXES, AND REIMBURSEMENTS AS PERCENTAGES OF THE GENERAL PROPERTY TAX

Unit of Government	1866	1877	1887	1899	1911	1921	1929	1933	1938	1942	1945
All units.....	5.1	7.8	6.8	11.8	17.6	9.1	13.2	26.6	49.5	55.8	44.7
County.....	1.0	00.9	1.4	1.5	10.5	11.9	13.4	40.4	80.4	99.5	90.9
Townships*											
Cities, villages..	0	1.2	0.8	0.9	4.4	2.9	2.2	2.6	21.3	2.5	5.5
School districts..	15.4	18.9	16.5	33.0	39.3	11.8	21.7	33.7	49.5	66.7	48.1

\*Uniformly 0-4%.

TABLE 18. THE COMPOSITION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE RECEIPTS

Unit of Government and Type of Receipt	1911	1931	1938	1942	1943
All units: general property tax; grants, shared taxes, etc.; other (fees, fines, earnings).....	74.0	79.0	64.5	64.5	61.7
County					
General property tax.....	91.5	75.0	52.0	51.0	51.0
Grants, etc.....	5.0	14.0	45.0	44.0	44.0
Other.....	3.5	11.0	3.0	5.0	5.0
Townships*					
Cities and villages					
General property tax.....	69.0	84.0	77.0	63.0	....
Grants, etc.....	8.0	....	1.0	1.5	....
Other.....	23.0	....	22.0	35.5	....
School districts					
General property tax.....	72.0	77.0	65.0	71.5	....
Grants, etc.....	28.0	20.0	32.0	27.0	....
Other.....	....	3.0	3.0	1.5	....

\*Uniformly 95%-99% general property tax.

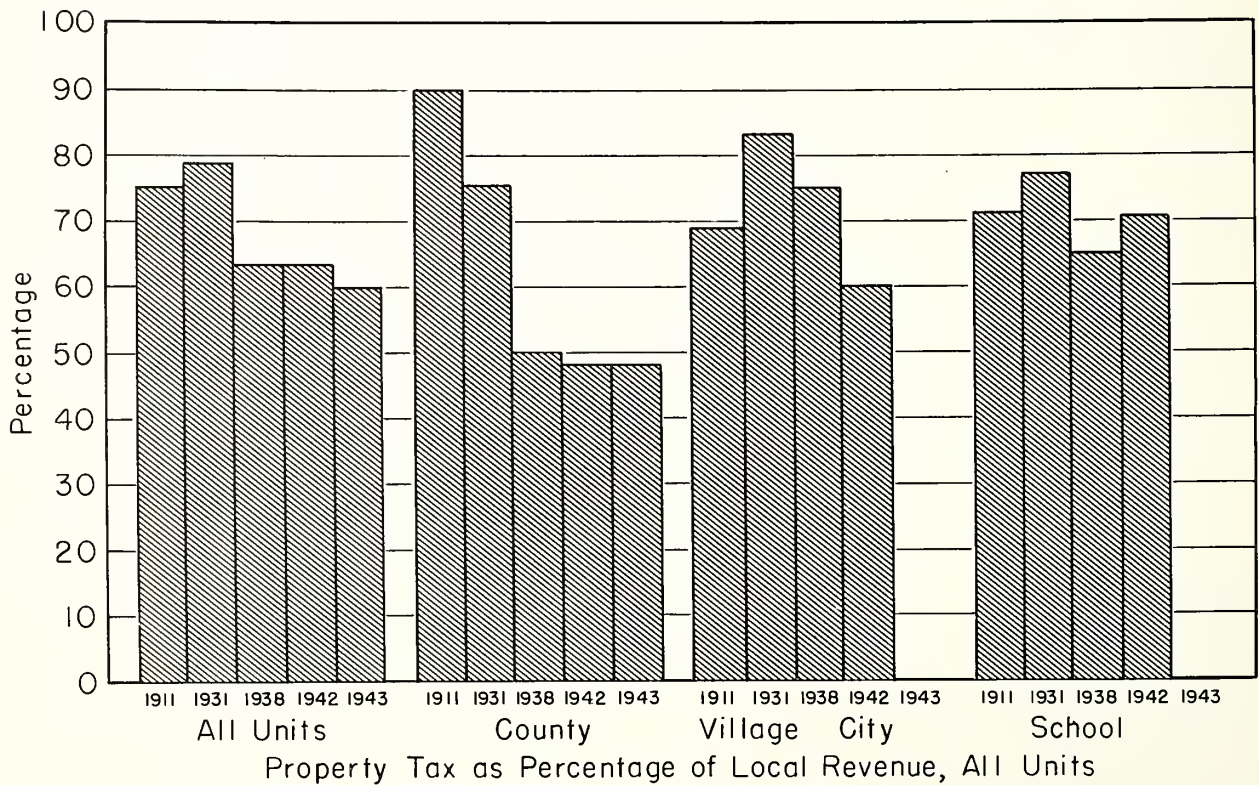
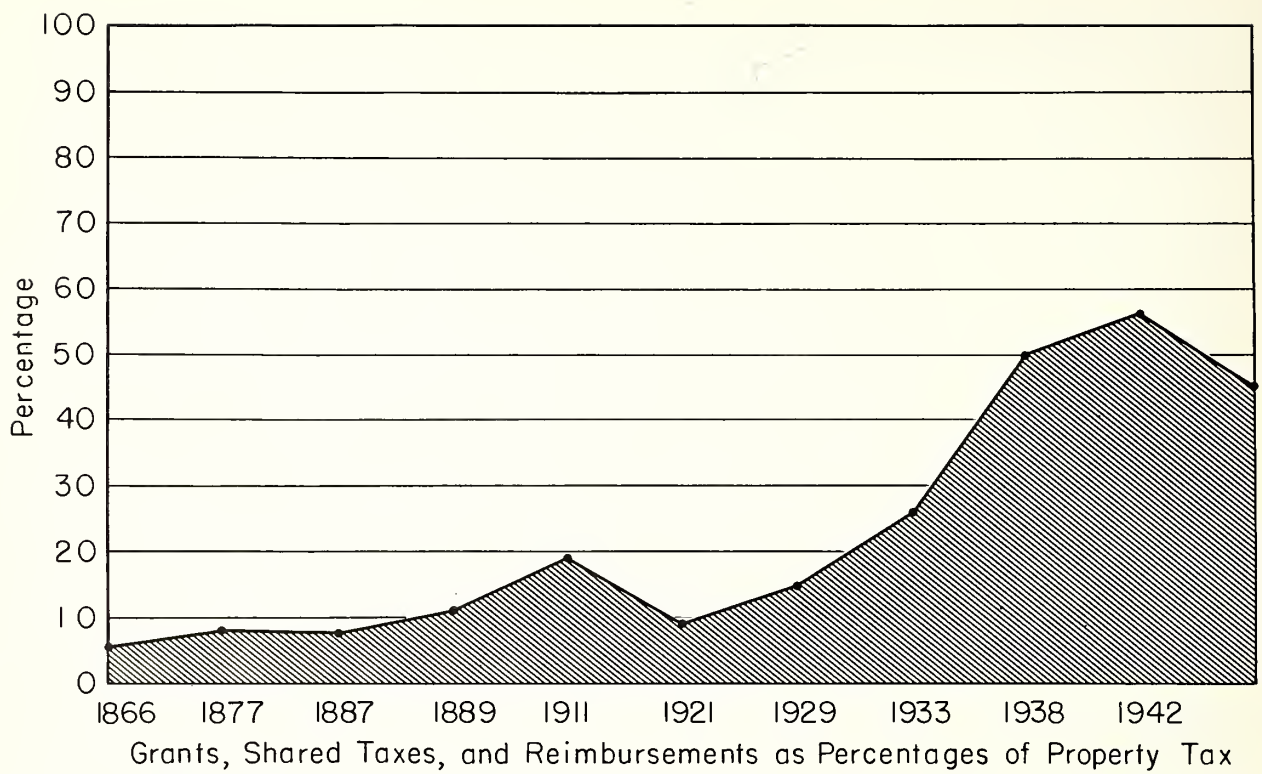


FIGURE 11. TRENDS IN RELIEF OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE AND THE PROPERTY TAX



in that their functions are mostly local in character; they do not contribute significantly to welfare, relief, or educational activity.

Nevertheless, both townships and incorporated places have been hard pressed for revenue. Townships have met the problem by sharp economy, and by allowing the burden of big government to fall on county, state, and nation. Cities and villages have turned to supplementary forms of local revenue, especially fines, fees, licenses, and departmental and utility earnings. Until recent years, the total intake from these sources remained fairly constant at a proportion of about one fourth of the total revenue receipts; since 1940, the share has risen above one third. This trend is one of the most interesting features of local government finance. Most villages, as well as the city of Lake Crystal, sell both water and liquor, at an increasing rate of profit. Amboy in 1942 reported total current governmental expenses of \$5474 and total tax and other revenue of \$3995. In contrast, the combined costs of its liquor and water enterprises amounted to \$81,735, and total revenue to \$86,066. An amount of \$8000 was promptly transferred to cover municipal operating deficits and to swell the surplus accounts of the village treasury (invested in United States bonds to produce additional revenue).

Good Thunder's accounts were equally liquid. In 1942, its current governmental expenditures were \$4570, its total tax intake \$2738. A total of \$3274 was transferred from water and liquor accounts to cover the deficit. Other villages were even more fortunate. Mapleton, for example, realized a profit in 1942 of \$11,000.

If we acknowledge the propensity to consume the liquor which these municipalities dispense, and disregard for the moment the possibility of depression, it is unlikely that the villages of Blue Earth County will be forced to go hat-in-hand to higher levels. It is Mankato which will probably be pressed for revenue—although the present state of its commerce and the good health of its economy in general give assurance that the city will not soon join the march of municipalities on state and national treasuries.<sup>15</sup>

State and Federal Government. It is much more difficult to establish the amounts of state and federal revenue derived from the Blue Earth County area, since there are relatively few agencies which keep their accounts or construct their reports on a county basis. The problem is particularly acute in the case of the federal government; for example, there seems to be no practical method of determining the total of income tax payments from the county, despite the fact that they constitute the major part of the federal government's local revenue.<sup>16</sup> State reports, on the other hand, give some

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<sup>15</sup>On May 10, 1947, Sales Management estimated Mankato's 1946 retail sales per capita at \$1637, its effective buying income at \$4044. Its retail sales figure was the highest reported in the state; its effective buying income fifth.

<sup>16</sup>This statement is confirmed in a letter received from T. M. Casey, division chief of the Mankato office of the Internal Revenue Service, Minnesota District (April 6, 1948). The letter reads in part: "The information you request concerning tax collections for Blue Earth County is not available. Our office does maintain a record of cash revenues received. This is a minor part of the total revenue for the reason that cash payments are usually tendered on smaller obligations. When returns reach the central office . . . they are filed by name and not by town . . . In other words, information . . . might be available in St. Paul, but it could not be furnished unless a complete list of the names of taxpayers was supplied . . . The Collector's office does disseminate information . . . from month to month. This is done by the District and not by sections or counties . . ."

coverage of local tax receipts; but they make no attempt to segregate revenues obtained within each county from licenses, fines, inspectional fees, penalties, and departmental earnings.

Table 19 is an attempt to do this for the Blue Earth County area. Taking the reported figures and interpolating estimates of totals not available, one would estimate the amount of state revenues close to \$900,000.<sup>17</sup> This is roughly a third less

TABLE 19. STATE AND FEDERAL REVENUES LOCALLY RECORDED AS HAVING BEEN COLLECTED FROM THE BLUE EARTH COUNTY AREA

Source of Revenue	1942	1945	Allocation of Receipts
General property tax.....	\$139,997	\$138,735	State General Revenue Fund
Gross earnings tax, telephone companies (est.).....	9,000	10,000	1/6 General Revenue Fund; rest to local units
Insurance premiums tax.....	.....	.....	General Revenue Fund; Fireman's Relief
Bank excise tax.....	.....	10,652	Local units of site
Fire marshal tax.....	.....	.....	Fire marshal's office
Net income tax*			
Individual and fiduciary.....	72,868	143,161	Income Tax School Fund
Corporation.....	37,079	53,160	Distributed as state aid
Inheritance tax* (est.).....	9,000	21,454	4/5 General Revenue Fund; 1/5 county
Gift tax*.....	.....	.....	General Revenue Fund
Mortgage registry tax.....	3,834	5,934	1/6 General Revenue Fund; 1/6 county; 1/3 school; 1/3 municipal
Motor vehicle tax*.....	.....	.....	Trunk highway sinking fund
Net gasoline tax*			
Automobile.....	285,538	.....	2/3 trunk highway sinking fund; 1/3 road and bridge fund
Aviation.....	.....	.....	Aviation fuel tax fund
Air flight property tax.....	.....	.....	State Airports Fund
Aircraft registration tax.....	.....	.....	State Airports Fund
Liquor licenses*.....	.....	.....	General Revenue Fund
Other excises and duties*.....	.....	.....	.....
Fees, fines, departmental earnings, etc.*			
Hunting and fishing licenses.....	15,000	15,653	.....
Mankato Teachers College, etc....	30,000	32,887	.....

Sources: Reports of the county auditor for 1942, 1945; Statistics Bulletins of the Income Tax Division of the State Department of Taxation (Nos. 6, 9); personal interviews.

\*Sources of income also tapped by the federal government.

than the amount which would result from extending the per capita state revenue figure reported by the United States Census Bureau for 1941, a disparity resulting largely from the fact that none of the iron ore royalties and but a small proportion of total corporation (gross earnings) taxes are collected within Blue Earth County.

One can do little more than guess the totals of federal revenue. United States Treasury reports place the per capita figure of federal tax collections within Minnesota at \$24.52 in 1940, \$56.04 in 1942, and \$262.36 in 1945. If we take the latter two figures and multiply by the county's population (36,203), the totals become \$2,028,800 for 1942, \$9,498,200 for 1945. Both are highly unlikely. For the reasons given above—and particularly since federal receipts depend even more upon corporate income not concentrated in the Blue Earth area—the totals would seem more probable if they were scaled down by at least one third: roughly \$1,200,000 for 1942, \$6,000,000 for 1945. To these figures should be added departmental earnings, especially postal receipts.

<sup>17</sup>One of the principal items to be interpolated would be the income from the motor vehicle registration tax, which could be reasonably estimated at well over \$100,000.

To summarize: With a certain amount of grim determination and a willingness to guess, one can vaguely discern the outlines of government's revenue accounts within Blue Earth County. Local units receive nearly \$2 million, one third of it from state and federal sources. The state draws \$900,000 from the community, half of which it returns to local units. The federal government at the outset of World War II was taking a million and a quarter dollars out of the community and returning \$150,000 in the form of aid to local units; at the close of the war, federal aids had increased but slightly while revenue receipts from the county had climbed to \$6 million.

The net burden upon the community was about \$3.5 million in 1942; about \$8 million in 1945. If one includes the \$600,000 which eventually makes its way back to local units, the relative shares in total governmental revenues from the community in 1942 were four parts local, two parts federal, and one part state<sup>18</sup> in 1945, twelve parts federal, four parts, local, and one part state. This is not a trend; it is a transformation.

Among local units, the relative shares of the property tax have remained surprisingly constant over the past seventy-five years; but the recent trend toward increased federal and state aid has strongly favored the county and consolidated its position as the focal unit of local government.

### DEBT

Table 20, showing the record of indebtedness of local units in Blue Earth County, bears out four points especially significant to the present discussion.

TABLE 20. TRENDS IN THE DEBT STRUCTURE OF LOCAL UNITS IN BLUE EARTH COUNTY\*

	1912	1931	1933	1938	1942
All units					
Total debt.....	\$583,128.00	\$2,882,000.00	\$2,502,860.00	\$1,690,901.00	\$882,871.00
Per capita.....	19.88	84.02	73.95	49.96	24.38
County					
Total debt.....	170,253.00	1,380,000.00	1,150,487.00	759,655.00	442,155.00
Per capita.....	5.80	40.23	33.99	22.44	12.22
Townships.....	26,568.00	15,000.00	6,746.00	15,553.00	11,318.00
Cities and villages					
Total debt.....	351,967.00	304,000.00	250,065.00	236,126.00	155,398.00
Per capita.....	32.81	16.40	13.69	13.36	7.62
School districts.....	34,340.00	1,183,000.00	1,095,562.00	679,568.00	274,000.00

\*Figures before 1933 were taken from reports of the United States Census Bureau; those for later years from reports of the state tax commission (later state department of taxation) and from the records of the Minnesota public examiner. In 1902, the total debt for all units in the county amounted to \$370,255.00 or \$11.62 per capita; in 1922, \$3,148,000.00 or \$98.29 per capita.

In a very few instances have local units in the county been threatened by the statutory debt limit (10 per cent of assessed valuation for all except school districts, where the limit becomes 20 per cent). Even when they are, as Anderson points out (Local Government and Finance in Minnesota, Chapter IX), the debt limit is not strictly enforced.

First, it is evident that local borrowing has been affected by the same forces that determined the historic pattern of local expenditures. Debt totals were relatively stable at low levels until the turn of the century, climbed rather steeply during the next three decades, and then dropped off sharply with the onset of

<sup>18</sup>Postal receipts of the federal government are not included.



depression—the point at which the federal government and the state assumed increasing shares of the cost of government within the community.

Second, as far as debts are concerned, local units have greatly strengthened their fiscal position during the last two periods of national emergency. Debts reached their all-time high during the 1920s; later, under the cloud of depression and war, they took a sharp turn downward. In 1943, over-all debt figures reversed their downward trend when the Mankato school board decided to take advantage of low interest rates to float a million-dollar bond issue to finance the construction of a new high school after the war. Other local units, however, continued to redeem their obligations, and by 1945 had reduced their debt to the level at which it stood in 1912 before the trend toward "modern" government had fairly begun.

Third, there has been no attempt to follow a counter-cyclical fiscal policy; rather, the pattern has been just the reverse. Local finance is "sound" finance; debts can be afforded in good times but not in years of depression. Interestingly enough, the considerations that dictated the recent decision of the Mankato school board were essentially three: need (the senior high school had burned down and left the district with a problem of extreme crowding), current ability to pay, and low interest rates. The thought that they were adding to inflation did not enter as a restraining influence.

Fourth, local decisions regarding debt policy have been almost completely spontaneous and almost always independent of those made at other levels or by other units of government. Both state and local governments increased their debts during the period 1900-29, but the common factor was the universal desire for highways and better education, not a joint decision to increase debt. When the depression hit, the common code of political morality forced a policy of debt reduction on state and local units alike. The failure of the federal government to follow a similar course (however fortunate the effects of such heresy) helped plant the seeds of distrust which grew into the disappointing harvest reaped by the Democratic party in the 1940 election.

#### ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL

On the revenue side, the leading problem is still the administration of the general property tax. The system is at once centralized and decentralized. Local assessors—appointed in the two cities and elected in the villages and townships—still do the work. In this respect, the system has not changed since the tax was first levied ninety-five years ago, despite the criticism leveled against it. The type of person selected varies greatly.

Both in Mankato and in the outlying areas, assessment procedures show signs of the amateurishness with which they are conducted. And there is enough evidence of inequity to support at least part of the angry charges of taxpayers. For example, two brothers separated by township lines find their assessment on identical pieces of land and equipment differing by as much as three to one. A building in Amboy is valued at \$40,000 and another of the same size and type in Vernon Center is listed at \$10,000. Some of the inequities which occur are the result of influence and calculation. Yet bad as it is, local assessment has not been so wholly mismanaged as common belief would have it. The assessor's position is customarily given to a person whose character is above reproach. E. Lester Schwarz, for example, the assessor for Vernon Center Township, is a successful farmer with a college background and rare insight. His comments on the system are worth noting: "Some of the laws are . . . obsolete; but in general, those of us directly concerned are satisfied with the system. Our lowly assessor will appraise our real and personal property and upon his good sense depends to a large extent the tax money which supports our schools, our roads, our welfare fund, and all of our state institutions. To me this was a

tremendous responsibility for which the remuneration was inadequate. I felt the need for revision of some of the laws governing this office, but I believe the great majority of those directly concerned would look for the improvement of our system by modernization rather than by abolition."

The argument, too, can be made that since the federal government does not depend at all upon the property tax, and the state government only slightly, the tax in fact is primarily a local concern and therefore quite properly a matter for local administration.

"Modernization" of the system has been called for both locally and at the state level for many years; valuations by even the more alert assessors have been notably out of line both within the county and within the state at large.<sup>19</sup> Long ago, improvements began: the creation of a county board of equalization in 1855; and, superimposed upon this board, the state board of equalization in 1860. Controls were strengthened further with the establishment of the state tax commission in 1907. As subsequent events proved it impossible to produce equity from above, recommendations for county assessment, first made by the state auditor in the 1860s, were finally implemented by Blue Earth County in 1946. As a pioneer venture the county appointed a county supervisor of assessments to oversee the work of local appraisers, and within a year, the legislature had made the system uniform throughout the state.

Some centralization has also been achieved in tax collection: taxes of all units are now paid to the county treasurer. It is the actual levying of the tax which is neither centralized nor coordinated.<sup>20</sup> The governing boards of the various units meet, argue, vote, and adjourn in harried and hurried fashion; and only the facts of overlapping membership, attendance of citizens at public hearings, the several jurisdictions in which they reside, the general predisposition of public officials toward economy, and the politics of penury are present to bring local tax rates into line at all. True, there are statutory limitations upon both mill rates and total levies. But these are so generous that Blue Earth County units have rarely felt the restriction.

What little integration there is in the administration of the property tax seems even less when compared with the total revenue system of government within the community. The lack of coordination noted by the Treasury Department's Committee on Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations<sup>21</sup> is clearly seen in the diversity of local payments and procedures. Everyone sooner or later becomes a tax collector: filling stations, employers of all types, theaters, individuals, and even churches. The whole picture is at best confusing, and the life of a taxpayer becomes a harried one. In the course of his composite tax day, Rex Hill, owner of a teacher-employment bureau and an ardent outdoors enthusiast, will drop by the county courthouse to pay his general property tax, walk three blocks downtown to purchase his automobile license, two blocks to the city hall to buy a dog license and pay his water bill, on three more blocks and one over to buy his duck stamp at the post office, then on to his favorite hardware store to pick up his hunting and fishing licenses, back to the office to complete his income tax returns (one for the state and one for the federal government) and mail in the payroll and income tax deductions for his employees along with a separate

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<sup>19</sup>See the Biennial Report of the Minnesota Department of Taxation for 1945-46, Chapter III.

<sup>20</sup>The county auditor computes the tax rates for all local units, but only in the mechanical sense of translating the several budget decisions into mill-rate levies which are then spread against local properties.

<sup>21</sup>United States Treasury Department, Federal, State, and Local Government Fiscal Relations, Senate Document No. 69, 78th Congress, 1st Session (1943).

envelope containing payment of the state property tax on the airplane he owns. Closing the office for the day, he drives into the filling station on his way home, commiserates with the owner on the plight of the taxpayer—and watches the pump click off four cents to the state and one and one-half cents to the federal government for each gallon purchased.

Of course he does not have to do all this in one day. Individual payments can fade into the routine of day-to-day existence over a long period.

#### GRANTS-IN-AID

Midway between revenues and expenditures is the grant-in-aid, an expenditure for the unit dispensing it and part of the revenue structure of the unit receiving it. The grant has become one of the few cohesive forces in the community's government, even though its effect has been limited, first, to the county and to the school districts (since townships and incorporated places operate almost wholly apart from the grant-in-aid system); and second, to the vertical coordinate of local, state, and federal government—i.e., the grant does little or nothing to bring units of the same class, or agencies of the same unit into line at the local level.

Further, the grants themselves are fragmented. The county at present has to deal with only two principal state agencies: the division of social welfare and the department of highways. But there are a number of smaller items (see Table 14) which relate the county to other state agencies; and during the heyday of the thirties, the county board performed acrobatic feats to keep in simultaneous contact with the assorted variety of fund-granting agencies it did business with.

The problem for the school districts has not been that of dealing with many masters—the state department of education is the only one—but in getting to know what aids are available and in complying with their diverse requirements.

Following is a list of aids to education in Blue Earth County, 1944:<sup>22</sup>

#### State Aids

- Paid in full
  - Transport of crippled children
  - Nonresidence, high school tuition.
  - Training of teachers
- Subject to prorating
  - Classification aids
    - Graded elementary schools
    - Ungraded elementary schools
    - Junior high schools
    - Senior high schools
    - Six-year high schools
    - Four-year high schools
    - High school department
  - Special department aids
    - Agriculture
    - Industrial
    - Home economics

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<sup>22</sup>The list was compiled from reports of the state department of education (unpublished during the war) and from information obtained in interviews with the county superintendent of schools and with the clerk of the Mankato school board. To this list might be added the nutritional aids available from the federal government and supplemented by community organizations.



- Commercial
- Vocational
- Special classes for defectives
  - Deaf
  - Blind
  - Subnormal
  - Defective speech
  - Crippled
- Library aid
- Gross supplemental aid: expenditures in excess of revenue from 30-mill tax
- Gross transportation aid
- Limited nonresidential high school transportation
- State aids from special appropriations
  - Gross earnings tax aid
  - Evening school aid
  - Summer school for crippled children
- Income tax apportionment
- Apportionment from state endowment trust fund
- Federal Aids
  - Smith-Hughes and George-Deen funds
    - Agriculture
    - Trades and industries
    - Home economics
    - Distributive occupations
  - Rehabilitation
    - Veterans (Public Law 16)
    - Civilians (Public Law 113)
  - National defense
    - Vocational education and equipment
    - Out-of-school youth
    - National youth

On the expenditure side, the conditioned grants and shared taxes represent one phase of the discipline to which local units have been subjected. The remainder include the whole body of state laws and administrative regulations governing local activity—e.g., weed inspectors shall not be hired for longer than five months; the county auditor shall levy a one-mill tax upon township property the proceeds of which are to be used to finance the dragging of town roads; the salaries of the various county officials shall be so much per annum.

But just as local officials have adjusted to this legal framework so they have also found the grant a not-too-restrictive device. Some sharp conflicts have been touched off by attached conditions—e.g., the county board's declaration of war on the Social Security system when asked to hire a qualified welfare secretary.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, school boards have balked at certain school construction payments. In this particular tug of war, they have found state and county school superintendents unyielding; but in others, they have scored victories of their own. By closing their schools and transporting their pupils to nearby districts of high rating (particularly to the Mankato Teachers College training school which asks no nonresident tuition), a number of districts have cut their costs and increased their aids—one district outside Mankato managing the arrangement so successfully that it was able to reduce its tax levy to four mills and open a bank account with the proceeds.

<sup>23</sup>See Paul N. Ylvisaker, The Battle of Blue Earth County (Washington, D.C., 1949).

Yet on balance, grants and other supplementary aids have served to promote the orderly and integrated system of expenditure—at least they provide a mechanism of intergovernmental coordination otherwise sadly lacking. Grants apart, the general rule is that officials of the different units and agencies do not confer on proposed outlays or cooperate in programing them. There is no attempt at community-wide planning or direction of funds, nor is there even an effort to assemble the necessary data.

The result is that no one person, official, organization, agency, unit, or level knows what government as a whole is doing within the community or how much it all costs.

#### A FUNCTIONAL VIEW OF FINANCE

By the very nature of modern American government, as demonstrated in the section on reporting, it is doubtful whether a complete and accurate picture of local finance can ever be constructed. Yet in the attempt lies promise of wearing down the barriers between levels and units of government and of expanding the community's perspective on government as a whole.

Such an attempt would best be concentrated on the functional approach which is the one method of cutting through administrative mass to give a meaningful picture of the governmental process and its cost. The effort becomes a lonely one. In the area of local government, one keeps company with the Minnesota public examiner and the United States Census Bureau; but the search for data on state and federal activity (except in the field of highways) leads one into the no man's land of governmental reporting. For example, statistics on agricultural and public health expenditures are at best incomplete.

Agriculture, which within recent years has become one of the four major fields of community government, currently requires expenditures of the same general order of magnitude as highways, education, or welfare. Fully 75 per cent of agricultural payments within the community are made directly by federal agencies. The following summary includes the main items of expenditure and wherever possible the amounts involved (1945).

Conservation and land-use planning (\$226,116).....	Conservation payments of AAA (\$133,498.77); ditch maintenance financed by the county (\$92,617)
Credit.....	Administrative costs and operating losses of the credit agencies (all federal)
Marketing and price (\$400,000).....	AAA subsidies (est. \$400,000); state- federal market reports, grading, and inspection
Control of plants and animals (\$5295).....	Township weed inspection (est. \$600); county weed inspection (\$3395); county- state bounties (\$1300); state-federal cattle testing and barberry eradication; state quarantine and indemnity payments; state and federal inspections
Research and education (\$12,273).....	County agent (county \$2523; state and federal est. \$1500; county Farm Bureau est. \$500); county fairs (county \$950; state est. \$3800); agricultural instruc- tion in high school (Mankato school district est. \$1200; state est. \$300; federal Smith-Hughes Act \$1500); Farm Security supervisors; state-federal extension specialists; state-federal promotional literature

The known expenditures total nearly \$650,000—three fourths the amount spent locally in 1945, about the same amount as is spent annually on highways, roads, and streets, and about twice the amount for welfare and relief.

Health expenditures are even more widely dispersed than those for agriculture, as shown in the tabulation. With few exception, the only figures available are those reported by local organizations.

<u>Organization and Service</u>	<u>Expenditures (1945)</u>
Non-governmental	
Blue Earth Public Health Association.....	\$ 1,927
Blue Earth Red Cross: share, county health aid, education, nutrition (est.).....	15,000
Community Chest: aid, nutrition.....	2,200
Other (Kiwanis, etc.): incidental aid.....	.....
Local Government	
County	
County nurses, salary and expenses.....	\$ 3,955
Health office, travel to conferences.....	14
Quarantine (reimburse townships).....	69
Vital statistics.....	349
Direct relief for medical purposes.....	27,700
OAA: excess medical payments.....	1,085
Total.....	\$33,172
Townships: Health officers and quarantine (est.).....	\$250
Villages and Lake Crystal: Health officers and quarantine (est.).....	\$250
Mankato	
Health officer and milk inspector.....	\$ 3,416
Detention hospital, contagious diseases.....	2,372
Garbage removal and incinerator.....	11,781
Total.....	\$17,569
School district (Mankato)	
Nurses and clerk, salary and expenses.....	\$ 3,565
Other (medical services, mental examination).....	400
Total.....	\$ 3,965
State Government	
Teachers college: health service and nurse.....	\$ 3,781
Division of social welfare	
Share county patients.....	\$ 2,158
General hospital, OAA, excess medical payments.....	613
Total.....	\$ 2,771
Other agencies and other services (see Chapter 4)	
Federal Government	
District unit No. 2: prorated cost of services.....	\$ 1,557
Other agencies and other services (see Chapter 4)	

Even with the gaps indicated the data support several observations. The first is that public health expenditures—unless one includes the larger welfare costs involved in institutional care for the blind, crippled, and mentally defective, as well as public outlays for water systems, etc.—are not a sizable part of the total budget of government within the community. Second, the total of what are now isolated expenditures is almost high enough to match the standard one dollar per capita recommended by Haven Emerson and the American Public Health Association as a minimum for a community health unit.<sup>24</sup> The implications are clear. The standard is too arbitrary to serve as a satisfactory guide to local policy until all the "invisible" services

<sup>24</sup>Emerson, op. cit., p. 2.



of private and other governmental organizations have been singled out and evaluated. Further, if these services do exist, some effort should be made to coordinate and possibly to integrate them.

### SUMMARY

From what appears to be a quicksand of statistics one emerges with several clear-cut conclusions about government and finance in Blue Earth County.

First, the financing of government in the community has gone far beyond the confines and competence of local units.

Second, of the total sums involved in local government, roughly two thirds is obtained through the property tax, and all but 5 to 10 per cent of the rest comes from state and federal sources. In other words, Blue Earth County citizens—as a local constituency—are carrying only slightly more than two thirds of the costs of local government.

Third, while it is impossible to measure the amounts involved with any degree of accuracy, it is clear that in dollars and cents, as much of the community's government takes place outside the structure of local units as within it. State and nation, in addition to financing one third of the cost of local government (1945), spend as much within the community directly as do all local units combined.

Fourth, there is no great disparity between the total amounts the state takes from the community in taxes and other revenues, and what it pays into the community in the form of aids and direct expenditures. If anything, the balance of payments is in favor of the community.

Fifth, after the depression and until the war there was no great disparity between local revenues and local payments of the federal government, which should dispel—in this one instance, at least—the notion that wealthy communities (as local polities) lose financially by the drift toward big government and by its characteristic blending of local, state, and federal tax resources.

Sixth, because of the narrowness and incompleteness in present methods of reporting, no one in the community is aware of all this.

Once again, one is led to the general observation that government at the local level has become the common concern of all three levels and a composite of their activity. While there are evidences—some of them striking—of increasing intergovernmental cooperation (the central collection of local taxes, the increased use of grants and shared taxes, the office of the county agent, the joint budget prepared annually by state and federal health authorities, the district health unit itself, the whole system under which highways have been administered) nothing like the considered and systematic collaboration which seems to be required by the growing interdependence of the three systems has yet been achieved.

It may be that complete integration and a fully planned system of intergovernmental cooperation may never be realized. Intricacy is in part a function of bigness, and government in the community is big. Furthermore, if the system is to remain flexible, some loose-jointedness must be tolerated.

Yet there are two reasons for expecting and developing greater cooperation. First, the system is moving very gradually in that direction under its own steam. Second, the disintegration which now exists is a drag on efficient administration and on intelligent political action at all levels of government.

## CHAPTER 9

### Summary and Perspective

A key to analyzing the surprisingly intricate problems of government within Blue Earth County has been given by F. J. Roethlisberger, in outlining what he calls the "Road Back to Sanity": "There seems to be an assumption today that we need a complex set of ideas to handle the complex problems of this complex world in which we live. We assume that a big problem needs a big idea; a complex problem needs a complex idea for its solution. As a result, our thinking tends to become more and more tortuous and muddled."<sup>1</sup> Among the several ways in which he believes sanity will be achieved, Roethlisberger includes "having a few simple and clear ideas about the world in which we live."

The need for those few simple and clear ideas has become particularly evident in dealing with the problem of government in Blue Earth County. Facts and opinions seemingly without pattern tumble in upon the individual, who reacts by obsessive thinking. A common reaction of the citizen is to see himself as the harried taxpayer threatened with being swallowed by an advancing leviathan and to retreat further into apathy and negative criticism; the official grows even more concerned with his own jurisdiction; and both, having rationalized their positions, develop a compulsion to impose order upon an environment they cannot completely understand. Finding they cannot control the system, they fall back upon myths and symbols which satisfy their emotions but not the facts, and which, even if they make life and thought easier, serve also to complicate the problem of government.

The "simple and clear" ideas which emerge from the present study are essentially the seven which follow:

I. By a process of long and logical development culminating in the drama of the depression and the New Deal, Blue Earth County has been drawn into the main current of national life and government.

II. But, having felt the impact of the "new centralization," the community is not entirely willing to accept it as a natural or unalterable development, and is reluctant to admit a part in promoting it.

III. Instead, the community regards the development skeptically, preferring to interpret it as a calculated (and hopefully a short-lived) intrusion of central government into local affairs. The prevailing attitude is a negative one.

IV. The "new centralization"—i.e., the expanding role of state and nation—has expressed itself locally not so much in an increased control over local units as in a proliferation of governmental agencies. The problem it creates is mainly one of coordination, and this in turn is just as much a problem in social and political psychology as it is in administration.

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<sup>1</sup>F. J. Roethlisberger, Management and Morals (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1942), pp. 7-8.

V. It would be comforting to believe that the problems are of a transitional nature and soon to be resolved. In large part, they are not. The drift toward centralization is inexorable and likely to continue; and the friction it produces is an inevitable and essential part of the process of democratic government.

VI. In all this there is evidence of a complex of forces which are beyond local or even rational control.

VII. Yet there is a place for conscious change; and developments themselves suggest the more promising techniques: an emphasis upon intergovernmental cooperation, and a functional approach to the study and problems of community government.

## I

The first "simple and clear" idea is a summary of the chapters thus far. From whatever angle one chooses to make his study, it is clear that government within the community is a composite of local, state, and federal action. Previous chapters have supported this conclusion by showing, first, that the structure of government within the community bears little resemblance to the popular concept of the American system: it is not a pyramid of three distinct levels, with only one—the broad base of local government—in touch with the community. Increasingly, with the development of the welfare state, all levels of government have come to bear directly upon the local citizen body. Today one will find operating within Blue Earth County as many agencies of the central governments as there are units of local government; and local units themselves are being used increasingly as agencies for state and national purposes.<sup>2</sup>

Previous chapters have also indicated that each major function of government within the community is a patchwork of local, state, and federal activity. While it is generally true that the dynamics of the system have shifted noticeably toward central governments, there is great variation from one function to the next. There is considerable variation, too, in the extent to which the services of each level of government have been integrated and coordinated.

In agriculture, the focal point of leadership and control has moved successively from local government to the state, and from the state to the national government. Currently, it is the latter that plays the dominant role in the community, while state and local units carry on in a more traditional manner, their services reflecting the stage in the historical development of policy at which they became involved. There is no uniformity in the administrative methods that state and nation have used to accomplish their purposes within the community. Depending upon circumstances, they have acted through local units, through quasi-governmental and private organizations, and directly through joint or separate agencies of their own. The result has been a full range of service to local farmers but hardly a coordinated expression of governmental policy.

The function of government in the field of health is even more disjointed. All units and levels are involved, with the state playing the central and dynamic role. Because of the far-reaching nature of public health services, the incidental way in which most agencies have been involved, and not least the unreceptive climate of local opinion, one will find that there is more administrative machinery than there

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<sup>2</sup>The proliferation of units and agencies is not a development peculiar to the area under study. The Council on Intergovernmental Relations in Henry County, Indiana, reported a total of 327 (110 local, 111 state, 106 federal); the council in Santa Clara County, California, listed 539 (363 local). See Adventures in Governmental Gearing in Henry County, Indiana, and Better Intergovernmental Relations (Santa Clara County, California).



is service, and that practice lags well behind the law. There is no cohesive factor binding the loose aggregate of services together other than the strong spirit of localism and the coincidence of professional and lay interests.

Highway development has demonstrated the possibility of cooperative action despite the handicaps of many-tiered government; yet teamwork in this field has depended upon a set of conditions not likely to be duplicated within other fields. Highway development is a single well-defined activity of government rather than a conglomerate of services, and is not, therefore, so subject to dispersive tendencies. Furthermore, the widespread demand for good roads and the existence of recognized standards of construction and maintenance have combined to push myth and intergovernmental barriers aside. Administration is still scattered and finance still complicated, but the over-all picture is encouraging.

Finally, the previous chapters have shown that the conception of government as a loose aggregate of local, state, and federal activity is confirmed by a study of finance. More governmental money is received and spent outside the accounts of local units than within them; and one third the cost of local government is borne by state and nation. The mechanics of the system, however, are so involved and obscure as to render it impossible to give an accurate description of governmental finance in the area.

However disordered the resulting system may seem, it is the product of long and natural development. The nature of the American polity has been to meet problems as they arise, with increasing freedom for citizens to act at all three political levels. Even during the years of settlement, the community's government was much as it is today—a complex of local, state (territorial), and national action. Except in degree the situation has never been otherwise; at no time has either the state or the federal government retired from the field and left local units to enjoy complete or unrestricted control over the community's affairs.

Thus it is necessary to dispel a second popular myth: that there was once a golden age in the community's history when government at the grass roots was completely local and unfettered. Only in the broadest sense can one distinguish stages in the development of government that show differing techniques in the system of local administration, and varying degrees in the relative importance of the three levels. Until roughly 1875, local government operated under a broad framework of state constitutional and statutory provisions; and state and national governments took only occasional interest in local affairs. Between 1875 and 1900, state participation became more regular, taking especially the form of administrative supervision, but also of direct local action. At the same time the federal government showed signs of regularizing its relationships with the state, though not yet expanding its interest in local affairs.

The first three decades of the twentieth century, and particularly the second, brought a precipitous rise in the costs of government at the local level, financed principally by state and local units. In the functional areas where this rise occurred, there was not a great expansion of local administrative machinery, but rather an extension of the grant-in-aid principle. The burgeoning of administration took place in the area of field inspection and enforcement, particularly by state government. The depression and the full-dress entrance of the federal government onto the local scene is the most recent stage in the development, and the one which has worked the greatest increase in local administration and finance.

In all this, Blue Earth citizens have been active despite their prevalent belief that the development is fundamentally one of aggression consciously contrived by the central governments. As citizens of the state, they took the lead in pressing for agricultural relief in the seventies; they reacted with pride to the continuous

expansion of state welfare and educational facilities; they joined in strengthening the position of the dairy industry in the eighties; they turned from apathy to enthusiasm quickly enough to become the pioneer contingent in Minnesota's good-roads movement; and they have consistently welcomed state aids for educational purposes. As part of the national community, they have petitioned for better postal service, enlisted the support of the federal government in local defense, contributed to the rise of agricultural and regulatory services by their support of the Populist program and their continued affirmation of the Farm Bureau platform, welcomed National Guard and educational aids, and turned with initial enthusiasm to the New Deal.

In its broader outlines, then, the picture is clear; government in Blue Earth County—155 local units, 150 state and federal agencies, over \$5 million spent annually, more than 2000 officials and employed personnel, and not much in a mechanical way to hold it all together—is but local evidence and the cumulative record of the development of big American government, a development in which citizens of Blue Earth County have played an integral part.

## II

But Blue Earth County, having felt the impact of the "new centralization," is not willing to accept it as a natural development, and is reluctant to admit having had a part in promoting it. The community's prevailing attitude toward centralization is negative; and the appearance of federal action programs—the most recent and far-reaching instance of central government expansion into the community—has been regarded by most citizens as a needless intrusion into local affairs and a calculated effort to supplant local self-government.

One must be cautious, of course, in speaking of a "prevailing attitude," in view of the intangible and atomized nature of public opinion. There is no one in the community who is completely opposed to the intervention of central government. The post office, the Mankato State Teachers College, the state highway department units, and the National Guard are universally accepted parts of the community's life; moreover, there is not a single agency of the central government that does not have an element of local support.

But however intangible and however far it is from being monolithic, prevailing opinion in the county is a very real and identifiable factor. It represents the community's preponderant reaction to the modern development of government when considered in the abstract.

Instances have already been cited in the preceding chapters which show how unresponsive their reaction has been: the personality of Dr. Hielscher and her continuing influence upon the administrative philosophy of local public health personnel; the attitude of Dr. Liedloff as expressed in his critical comments on federal activity; the fiery opposition of Mankato's former mayor to everything that impinged upon his sphere of influence; the long record of Republicanism at the polls; the reluctance of the county to accept federal aid for secondary roads; the embarrassed cashing of subsidy checks by the county's prosperous farmers. It is a climate which can be detected instantly in street corner conversations; in Farm Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, service club, and church meetings; in the columns of the county's six newspapers; in the solemn epitaph pronounced by a township official: "The New Deal is dead—sic semper tyrannis!" It explains in large part the emotional impact of the terms "government" and "bureaucracy"—terms which are not, interestingly enough, used to designate local units or their personnel.

The expression of this antipathy toward the centralizing drift in modern government ranges from near-hysteria to quiet apprehension. In 1945, a year before his conversion to a broader faith, County Commissioner W. C. "Bill" Minks signed the following statement, adding his own emphases: "I see it [government] drifting to

centralization of power. I am a strong advocate for HOME RULE in retaining the grass roots of government, in all rural and urban territories throughout the State and Nation . . ."

That same year, under the heading "Bring Government 'Back Home'---They're Trying to Do It in Blue Earth County," the Minnesota Taxpayers Association published an Orwellian statement by Chairman Cliff Russell on the findings of the Blue Earth County Council on Intergovernmental Relations, the gist of which is familiar to the regular readers of Russell's editorials in the Mankato Free Press:

"If the present tendency continues we are going to see a vast federal bureaucracy ruling the nation from Washington, functioning through regional federal authorities that will in time eliminate even state lines . . . Many officials and students of government in Washington favor and ardently believe in such a bureaucratic all-powerful central government. . . . Or there may evolve a change under which the federal government would bring the vast grants, aids, and matching funds . . . to the state line and literally dump them there. The state government would then take over with complete authority for administering and disbursing these funds under broad rules and regulations of the federal government. Such a plan probably is preferable to a huge federal bureaucracy, but it holds the danger of creating 48 all-powerful state governing machines, instead of the single bureaucracy in Washington. As an alternative . . . the Blue Earth county group recommends . . . strengthening, revitalizing, and equipping local governing units to handle these funds themselves; to preserve their independence and integrity, which is clearly a prime essential if our representative form of democracy is to survive."<sup>3</sup>

One of the most dispassionate statements came from a Mankato lawyer whose attachments one would expect to predispose him to a more extreme view: G. P. Smith, Republican, national trustee of the Chamber of Commerce, past president of the Mankato Kiwanis, past commander of the local American Legion post, has adopted the philosophy that contemporary difficulties are the result of "society's failure to keep up with the internal combustion engine. Because of modern communication, it has become apparent that the state must in some degree enter the local field, and that the federal government must in some degree enter into both state and local areas. But I am anxious to see that this is carried out in such a way that its impact will not tend to weaken or destroy local government."<sup>4</sup> Smith's statement, cautious and simple as it is, represents a point of view rare in the community. To its left are the comparatively few briefs for more centralization, usually partisan in nature, and to the right, the preponderance of local opinion set in terms of localism and the containment of centralization.

### III

The reasons for Blue Earth's prevailing attitude are many and not always rational. The economic basis is immediately evident. Blue Earth County is prosperous—able to afford the luxury of an antiquated system of local self-rule as well as its share in the rising costs of modern government. From this position of security, the community fashions views on state and national problems which are strongly opposed to the emergence of a centralized welfare state.

From a geographical and sociological point of view, the community is too far removed from the problems of urban and industrial life to appreciate, except

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<sup>3</sup>Minnesota Taxpayers Association, Taxation 12:1-2 (August 1945).

<sup>4</sup>Letter to the Blue Earth County Council on Intergovernmental Relations, August 11, 1945.



vicariously, their influence on contemporary politics. It is still predominantly agricultural and small-town, still convinced that government can continue to be local and personal, still sure of the values upon which it has been reared: a stable community life, pioneer individualism, and the recurring need to wage defensive war against the tyranny of government.

The religious life of the community has also contributed to an attitude of independence. One of the principal reasons for continuing the small school district has been the desire to preserve a community of religious interest; and where this has not been possible because of diversity within the district, church groups—particularly Catholic and Lutheran—have established parochial schools of their own. Even within similar denominations there are divisive forces at work. Among Synodical Conference Lutherans, for example, church fellowship only on grounds of the Augsburg Confession is an article of faith held to as vigorously today as it was by the German and Norwegian church fathers who inspired the immigrations of the last century.

Against this whole background of conservative thought it is not surprising to find a consistent Republican record at the polls and a habit of selecting industrious if not enterprising men for public office. The politics of the community are first of all conservative, although within their framework they allow for a steady and sometimes strong support of certain agrarian movements. Being conservative politics and traditionally Republican, they explain in large part the community's antipathy toward the developing trends in government—trends which have been closely identified with the Democratic party.

Finally, and most difficult to isolate, there are the psychological components of the community's slow-moving habits; forces that weave together the strands of circumstance, personality, and environment, and fashion them into patterns of individual and group behavior. The only way to understand these factors is to see them personified.

State Senator Val Imm, to whom the proper aim of the modern citizen and politician is "the preservation of states' rights and of local prerogative, and the physical development of the community," is a full study in himself. He is first of all a staunch Republican for whom party loyalty is a cardinal principle. His opposition to the New Deal was therefore a matter of definition; but it was strengthened by certain conditioning factors which are part of the community mold. Born of conservative stock (German Lutheran parentage), schooled in the midwestern tradition of American individualism, and matured in local politics and the business world, he carries with him a deep allegiance to received symbols of right. Any evidence of disloyalty (Senator Ball's endorsement of Roosevelt), any suggestion of moral indifference (the marital problems of the Roosevelt family), any challenge to "basic American principles" (centralization or government ownership) arouse his immediate opposition. Regarded as a stalwart rather than as a moving force in local and state politics, he is everywhere respected for his integrity; and his faithfulness as a steward of the community's interest has been rewarded by a twenty-year tenure in the state legislature, and by a regular clientele for his print-shop and weekly newspaper (the Mankato News).

As there are representative personalities who reflect the community's attitude, there are also standard reactions which help to determine it. The most common of these are the tendencies to rationalize self-interest, to generalize from particulars, and to oversimplify. All these tendencies are in evidence among members of the business community. State and federal programs have usually involved regulation, red tape, a new way of doing things—or merely by their presence have served as reminders of governmental costs and their ultimate burden upon the taxpayers. The result is a negative attitude. A few persons, like Wallace Sterling, Republican shoe merchant and past president of the Mankato Chamber of Commerce, are able to criticize local, state, and federal governments in the same breath and with the same force, and to conclude on

viewing Mankato city government that "local people should clean their own house before worrying about the disorder of state and federal administration." The others, though just as nettled as he by local taxes, are likely to save their blasts for state and especially federal governments.

It is not always so simple to explain the hostile reaction of farmers, since they have often been party to the demands for governmental action and usually benefit from the results. Frequently the only explanation seems to lie in the mental set which a stable family background and the independent ways of farm life are likely to produce. This would appear to account for the impassioned attitude of the late Alfred Kroeger, whose modest income from his joint enterprise of farming and plastering gave him no apparent reason of wealth to oppose recent agricultural policy. Kroeger was also a critic of the Farm Bureau, even though his arguments against the New Deal farm policy carried the bureau's familiar ring. A further explanation lies in the fact that farmers are selective in their criticism, singling out those programs of the central government which they have reason or inclination to dislike: a very few resent REA, more dislike the county agent (and/or the Farm Bureau), still more the AAA, and so on down the line to the FSA which very few support. It is at this last stop down the line that their attitude toward government "in general" becomes set. There is also the familiar habit of generalizing from particular incidents. The inspection of herds, slaughter of diseased animals, and enforcement of sanitary regulations can become symbols of advancing tyranny; and when, as has happened, a farmer digs a \$1000 well with the approval of the county agent and then is forced to dig it all over again to meet specifications of the state health department, his attitude and that of his family and friends take on a permanent set.

Another indication of what determines local attitudes is found in the flexibility of those attitudes under conditions of stress. When the need or emergency arises, the call is sent out to St. Paul or to Washington for relief; and the agencies which respond are roundly welcomed. Examples have already been cited: military assistance and federal damage payments during the sixties, agricultural relief during the seventies, state protection of the dairy market in the eighties, the state entomologist's help in the chinch bug plague of the nineties, state attention to the Mankato typhoid epidemic in 1908, highway aid and increased educational and welfare assistance over the past thirty years—all were solicited and accepted by the community. That a reaction will set in with the return of normal conditions is merely added proof of the contention that the normal posture is one of resistance and opposition.

Perhaps the most critical factor in accounting for the existing antagonism toward state and federal government has been the overwhelming tendency to oversimplify and generalize—in particular, the tendency to retreat into myth. The last line of argument is to assign all the trials and tribulations of community and national life to "the government" and "the bureaucracy;" terms which if they have any meaning are intended to refer to the central units. At this favorite level of debate, words like "centralization," "local government," and "home rule" are no longer words, but self-contained and conclusive arguments. The result is a hardening of prejudice and a perpetuation of oversimplified and distorted concepts of government.

The forms such expressions take are interesting to examine. Colonel Ed Nyquist's statement of his chief concern regarding government ("stimulating citizen interest and participation in governmental affairs; and limitation of that federal and state activity which results in regimentation and stifling of initiative")<sup>5</sup> carries with it all the overtones of his career interests. He is secretary of the Mankato Chamber of Commerce, member of the Salvation Army's local advisory board, secretary of the

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<sup>5</sup>Statement to the Blue Earth County Council on Intergovernmental Relations, August 21, 1945.



Community Chest, secretary of the Mankato Builders Exchange, member of the Masonic Lodge, Elks Club, Lions Club, and United Commercial Travelers—and in his off-hours, commanding officer of the Third Infantry of the Minnesota Guard. Ed is a "natural" for his position: genial, robust in appearance and humor, and discreetly profane. By combining an instinctive flair for advertising with a personal and community pride he has won the good will of the surrounding trade area for himself and for Mankato merchants.

While Nyquist's political motto is but a simple expression of an outgoing temperament, calculated only to avoid controversy and to serve as a testimonial of good faith, the same words in the mouths of other members of the community become symbols to live by. Chairman Bill Minks of the county board of commissioners, when asked, like Nyquist, about his chief concern regarding government, responded with a statement which has already been quoted in part: "I see it drifting to centralization of power. I am a strong advocate for HOME RULE in retaining the grass roots of government, in all rural and urban territories through the State and Nation, and recommend an increase in the legislative salary schedule for local governmental official units to the average community income levels, which would have a tendency to invite better official material, and which naturally would create better government with more efficiency in office."<sup>6</sup> As the driving wheel on the county board and in other local circles, Minks has made that philosophy live. During the bleak years of the mid-thirties, he insisted that the burden of relief be borne locally—and the effectiveness of his appeal is attested to by the early disappearance of the county from FERA accounts. But sincere as Bill Minks may be in his desire for home rule and in his readiness to give his arguments meaning by facing the financial and administrative burdens which are involved, his oversimplified abstractions have not been entirely adequate to deal with the complex set of modern economic facts—and being too simple, they have led him frequently into positions of dubious merit. Faced in 1937 with a Social Security system that was becoming a fait accompli—whatever local opinion would have of it—and caught between the personnel standards of the system and his own sympathy with an unqualified employee, Minks quickly identified the program with tyranny and launched into a war of attrition with personnel officials. From 1939 to 1943, Minks was again astride his fiery steed, this time doing battle against a city-WPA alliance that was demonstrating the advantages of rural library service. The service was finally adopted by plebiscite and has since proved a complete success. Minks soon was its most ardent supporter.

Minks' concepts of local government, popular participation, local democracy, and the ogre of centralization are the going currency on the market of local politics. To the extent that they are based upon a calculation of personal advantage or grow out of a tenuous and uncritical affirmation of received notions of right, of government from afar, and of tyranny, they can be regarded as part of the psychological make-up of "the people" which gives fuel to the irrationalist attack on democracy—traits to be contended with rather than relied upon in the administration of government. And it cannot be emphasized too strongly that emotion and unreasoned judgment lie at the base of much of local opinion. There is reason to doubt the validity of the local vote except as a measure of local pain or indignation; elections become a thermostat which throws the political switch whenever the temperature rises high enough.

Again, the local government of which so much is heard does not exist. There are 155 separate instruments of local action, together forming a microcosm in which all the sinister and disintegrating forces imputed to the larger systems are hard at work. School districts maneuver themselves into position to exploit one another financially and to profit from state aid. County and city adopt separate spheres of influence;

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<sup>6</sup>Letter to the Blue Earth County Council on Intergovernmental Relations, August 10, 1945.



townships look askance at centralizing tendencies within the county and run their road graders without thought of cooperation.

It is only in the abstract of political debate or in moments of personal injury inflicted by central agencies that local government becomes integrated and its officers and constituents united—and furthermore, that state and federal governments are clearly and with prejudice distinguished from local government. Charlie Mayer, the primate who ran his city like a feudal lord, Bill Minks, who for a generation refused to mix with urban officials unless his political fortunes depended upon it (and they did not), and the school boards of districts 110 and 152, whose new buildings stand as monuments to the Balkanization of rural government are all made comrades-at-arms when the alarm of centralization is sounded. Meanwhile, the Mankato police sergeant who drinks his afternoon coffee with the state highway patrolman at the cafeteria next to the police station, the village postmasters who, though federal bureaucrats, are as much a part of their community as the local officials they help elect, the county nurse whose friends and heroes are members of the state department of health, are by the catapult of stereotyped thought suddenly thrown into opposing camps.

If one accepts the psychology of the system, local government becomes more of an urge than an institution. It is an urge which is not unique to the life of local government, but is part of the human factor which makes itself felt whenever distance and a power relationship are involved. Dr. F. D. McElroy, president of the Mankato State Teachers College, fought a running battle with state administrators over state control of personnel and finance from the time it was first imposed in 1939 until his retirement in 1946. C. E. Palmerston, manager of the local REA cooperative, was convinced that the St. Louis office, if given its head, would be running the local show; and in a gesture of independence he refused to follow "impractical" procedures such as REA's complex system of numbering line poles. Dr. Liedloff's success in meeting the dilemma of his own position is perhaps the supreme and triumphant expression of that urge: drawing salary from the federal government, working part time under the direction of the state, appointed health officer for the county, prime mover in the local Public Health Association, and engaged in private practice, Dr. Liedloff avoided any problem of schizophrenia by minimizing the federal government and attributing all favorable aspects of the health program to local self-government, the medical profession, and the lay members associated with it.

A second great symbol and myth is that of centralization and the phrase which almost inevitably accompanies it—"the destruction of local self-government." What basis the myth has in fact, a point which will be discussed later, is obscured by exaggeration. Local government in Blue Earth County is in a stronger position today than it has ever been. Its functions have grown tremendously over the years since the community's settlement; and within the period designated as the era of tyranny, i.e., the era of the New Deal, debts have been reduced to a bare minimum, taxes for local purposes have remained constant, and expenditures (and services) have increased. The point holds true even of the several classes of units within local government. Townships are currently spending more than they did during the twenties and fully eight times as much as they had before the turn of the century; and their concern with roads gives them a range of interest and jurisdiction which fully matches the agenda of earlier times. Municipal activity, even in the villages, is clearly greater in terms of both service and cost. School government has grown to include programs of nutrition and vocational education without sacrificing the essentials of local control. And the county has emerged from an obscure collection of routine offices to become the most promising unit of local government.

What is even more significant is that the increase of local government has been accomplished without a marked intensification of central control. As new functions and grants have been added, new conditions have also been imposed; yet at the same time the area of local discretion has been broadly extended. In a subjective way,

this proposition can be demonstrated in the person of Commissioner Minks, who was converted to the cooperative faith of the new federalism when he saw new vistas open to him in that direction. But the evidence is not all that subtle or intangible. Pos-  
ing to themselves this question "Are more powers being taken away than are being added?" Anderson and Polley analyzed legislative changes in Minnesota state-local relations between 1915 and 1939 and came to a similar conclusion: "One of the most striking things in the legislation of the past twenty-five years is the very considerable expansion of the functions of local government. It should be remembered, also, that most of these functions are optional with the local unit and that they can be undertaken by the local governments without state supervision. . . . The general conclusion of the authors is that the actual amount of state supervision and state control over local units in Minnesota has increased very little in the last twenty-five years, and that little has not been seriously, if at all, detrimental to local self-government."<sup>7</sup>

In addition, it should be remembered that whatever statutory control has been enacted has been shaped by a legislature sympathetic to local government. Moreover, as shown in Blue Earth County's successful attempts to short-cut Social Security personnel requirements and in the loose compliance of townships and other units with state health regulations, it is clear that what is law is not always practice.<sup>8</sup>

Thus the reality of the situation hardly squares with the myth that has grown up around it, but there are few in the community who have penetrated the myth to see that reality. One reason is citizen-apathy, a trait all too well known in Blue Earth. Apathy takes a number of forms. One is the reluctance of prominent citizens to seek local office, a reluctance more common among city-dwellers than among farmers. Another is the poor turnout at local elections. School district elections in the Mankato area seldom bring out more than 10 per cent of the vote, and at times less. Municipal elections do not fare much better. Editor Russell's "Round Our Town" column in the Free Press is frequently acrid on the subject:

"Tomorrow the general elections—if you happen to be one of the more than 60 per cent of the eligible voters who failed to cast their ballot in the primary last Monday, you have a particular responsibility to vote tomorrow. And if you voted in the primary you had better trek to the polls again tomorrow lest perchance the evidence of voter indifference be even more disgraceful than it was a week ago. Before you look at the sample ballot published this evening, just try and name any five of the eight candidates who are nominees for the council. Or, better still, see if you can name even two of the seven who were eliminated a week ago. Ask the first three people you meet who the nominees for municipal judge are, and every one of them will stammer and boggle without knowing there are no candidates and we do not vote for municipal judge until two years from now. Still we wonder why more or better candidates do not seek municipal posts; complain freely about the lack of efficiency in city affairs. After all, water does not rise above its source. Considering the casual attention the

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<sup>7</sup>William Anderson and Ira Polley, "Legislative Changes in State-Local Relations in Minnesota 1915-1939," Minnesota Municipalities 26:9-20 (January 1941).

<sup>8</sup>Note Edward Weidner's conclusions on this point: "The central thesis supported by the data collected in this study of three governmental activities in Minnesota is that local governments, by means of their influence in the legislature and in other ways, exert important power in the formation of state policy. Centralization has not yet progressed as far as many believe. The institution of local self-government has much more strength than a mere examination of legislative enactments indicates." ("State Supervision of Local Government in Minnesota," Public Administration Review, 4:226-33 (Summer 1944).

average citizen gives his city government it's quite remarkable that it is conducted as efficiently and economically as it is."<sup>9</sup>

Interest is somewhat higher in the rural communities where township meetings are still social events. In Vernon Center ". . . interest in and attendance at township meetings is great enough to bring out over half the male residents. When a 'hot' question is known to be pending, many more attend and vote and many women attend and vote . . . In general, our best men hold our township offices. They may have a natural bent for politics, which does not prevent them from doing their duties well."<sup>10</sup>

One must of course be cautious in judging citizen-interest from performance at the polls. The ballot is long and discouraging, and the heart of the community's politics lies in the rich associational life of the community, in the continuous interplay of pressures between elections, and in the subtle shaping of policy by influential figures in inconspicuous places. Everybody at one time or another takes part in the process, whether by attending an open city meeting to argue for a municipal airport (or maybe just to bait the mayor), or by inviting the city council and county board in for steak dinner before petitioning for a dance and liquor license.

Yet this pattern of politics does not give the community a coordinated control or a full perspective of the governmental process. Government remains the potpourri it was, and many things to many people: a school board, the county auditor, the game warden, a dairy and food inspector, the presidential election, an editorial against New Deal spending in the Mankato Free Press (rephrased in one or two of the county's weeklies), a Farm Bureau broadcast during the noon hour attacking the Murray-Kilgore bill, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and so on. These are the citizens' contacts with the governmental process, and of such stuff—mixed with the other ingredients of environment and personality—are fashioned the opinions of the individual and, in the aggregate, the prevailing attitudes of the community.

#### IV

Blue Earth's negative attitude toward developing trends in its government is, then, the product of a peculiar set of economic, social, religious, and political factors which are expressed in certain standard patterns of response—among them the rationalization of self-interest, generalizing from particular incidents, and a tendency to oversimplify. All of these, and particularly the last, have helped build the great myth of local thought: that local government is clearly distinguishable from state and federal government and is being progressively weakened and subverted by the insidious forces of centralization.

Yet all is not myth: the trend toward centralization is a very real one and has left its stamp upon the community's government. The trend is too real to be ignored, yet too important to be misunderstood.

Prevalent fears to the contrary, centralization has not led to the subjugation or destruction of local units. Rather, as shown above, local government in Blue Earth County has both steadily increased its services and strengthened its financial position without any marked intensification of central controls. Relative, however, to the growth of state and federal government, local government has lagged behind, so

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<sup>9</sup>Mankato Free Press, Fiftieth Anniversary Edition (April 5, 1937. But the voter is not entirely to blame—over a period of six years, a Mankato citizen votes for a total of fifty-six different federal, state, county, city, and school officers; in any one election, for example 1944, the number may be twenty-four. A townsman votes for a total of sixty, though not for more than twenty at one election.

<sup>10</sup>E. Lester Schwarz, letter of March 21, 1948.



that it now comprehends a diminishing share of the community's governmental life. This relative difference in rate of growth has been the essence of the "new" centralization. On the whole, centralization has been an additive process by which local government, too, has grown, but not so fast as state and federal. It has not been the "more of one and less of the other" proposition which has gained such wide currency and which still creates so many bitter but spurious antagonisms.

Centralization has taken form locally in two ways: first, in the expansion of local government through grants-in-aid and the development of cooperative federal, state, and local programs; second, in the emergence of "government locally"—that growing sector of the community's government which consists of direct local action by state and federal agencies. This second aspect of centralization appeared as soon as the community was settled, developed quickly after the eighties when the state became involved with inspectional and other enforcement work, continued apace during and after World War I, and spread weed-like with the inauguration of the New Deal.

Part of "government locally" remains unnoticed, an example being the United States State Department agent who enters the community only to carry out random personnel investigations or to chauffeur foreign dignitaries on their scenic tours through the area.<sup>11</sup> A larger part consists of the floating inspectorate, some of them (like the boiler inspector) familiar figures in the community, more of them known only to those with whom they do business. They may be liked or thoroughly resented, depending upon how long they stay on the job, the skill with which they adjust to the local man and his circumstances, and the nature of their assignment. Finally, there is that segment of government locally which represents the continuous administration of state and federal services: among many examples, the State Teachers College, Minneapolis state park, the state and federal district courts, the state district health units, the post offices, the state highway district headquarters, the National Guard, AAA, FSA, and the referee-in-bankruptcy.

It is the spread of "government locally," rather than the slow and relatively "safe" process of forging cooperative links among the three layers of government, which has been the spur to local resistance. As one after another agencies of the federal and state governments have descended into the community (particularly when dispatched by a Democratic administration in Washington) the citizen body has grown more and more restive, generalizing its dislike of individual agencies and policies into apprehensions of oppression, political intrigue, vast inefficiency, and enveloping centralization. There have been instances enough of each of these with the appearance of central—and particularly federal—programs in the community to confirm local suspicion. For example, Blue Earth could have little sympathy with charges made during the New Deal era that local government was incapable of effective action. Despite the sorry impression one might get from watching the obstreperous Mankato council in session, despite the tradition of mediocrity in local office, and despite the pandemic extent of citizen apathy, local units have a long record of achievement. By comparison with this record—especially in supporting the tremendous increase in governmental costs between 1910 and 1930—the self-assured claims of the newer agencies have been looked upon by local officials as juvenile boastings.

And as the thirties wore on, the heralded superiority of federal administration began to dissolve as the community got a closer look. Local administration of the Farm Security program went first to the county agent's son, and then as a political plum to a slow-moving local man whose family farm was used by the rural community as a negative lesson in farm operation. When the Employment Service was federalized during the war, it was managed by a person who previously had cast about in the Mankato

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<sup>11</sup>According to a State Department source, there were forty such agents located throughout the country in 1945, each assigned to a particular area.

business world with indifferent success. The community wished him well in his new position and reported their hirings and firings for him to use in his statistical reports—smiling wryly when these returned as statements by the service of what it was accomplishing locally.<sup>12</sup> AAA, widely heralded as the "new democracy," was administered by officials of township and county governments; and there were few who became so enchanted with the new democracy as to forget the golden chains by which they were bound. Yet even with subsidy and conservation payments as incentives, participating farmers showed less interest in AAA administration than they did in township government. Average attendance at neighborhood meetings of the AAA was reported as twenty, roughly 12 per cent of those eligible to attend.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, if local government had its own internal feuds and overlaps, the same was to be said for state and federal agencies. The federal government established six agricultural credit outlets in the community, three of them competing for each other's clientele, and all but one of them engaged in internecine warfare. State inspectors, one from the department of health and another from the department of agriculture, have taken to following each other into the hotels and restaurants of the community; and neither department has made an effort to coordinate their activities. The county sheriff watches wearily as his jail is separately inspected by investigators from the state department of labor and industry, the state division of public institutions, and the United States marshal's office. Across the street in the courthouse, the welfare board opens its books first to the state division of social welfare, then to the state public examiner, and finally to the Social Security Board—after which its case work is reviewed by readers from both state and federal offices.

It is the paradox of modern centralization that instead of having produced an administrative monolith it has compounded the dispersion of government at the local level. What was once a scattering of local units with a small number of central agencies has become under the impact of the new centralization a vast network of loosely related and often competing organizations. Such dispersion has inevitably had regrettable effects both upon public policy and administration, and upon the community as well. Not least of these effects has been the complicating of responsibility and control. With an increasing area of its life directly influenced by the central governments, the local community's traditional methods of control are no longer adequate. Local government is of diminishing help to local residents, and they get little satisfaction from waiting upon the legislative process at state and federal levels. The line of control this legislative process involves is long, slow, and—because of competing interests—not always sure.

Nevertheless, the community is learning to use its legislative delegates as direct pressure fronts on the administrative branches of state and nation. State Senator Imm was recently placed at the head of a local phalanx which descended abruptly and separately upon the governor, the state highway commissioner, and a representative of the public roads administration to urge greater use of local cement products in the construction of the state's highways. And Congressman John P. O'Hara spent several days "in line of duty" escorting a Mankato entrepreneur from one Washington bureau to the next while he appealed for clearance to develop a local hemp industry.

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<sup>12</sup>Postmasters and internal revenue agents have long been identified with politics and patronage; so, too, the local census director—and Mankato merchants are still convinced that the one responsible for the 1940 census missed nearly 2000 in his count of the city's population.

<sup>13</sup>The total number of participating farmers (i.e., farmers eligible for AAA payments) was 2204 in 1941; 3579 in 1943; 2752 in 1945. The county AAA committee, from whom the figures were obtained, did not specify the date on which the attendance average was computed. The 12 per cent noted above was calculated on the 1943 base.



Both examples point up the shortcomings of this adaptation. It is open only to those who have sufficient resources and influence, and represents the special rather than the general interests of the community. Moreover, the administrative branch cannot, and cannot be expected to, accommodate every special foray made upon it; and the attempt to do so may only complicate matters. To illustrate, the cement delegation received one answer from state officials, then broke in upon the federal representative before he could confer with the state highway commissioner and obtained quite another. The hemp entrepreneur, a Mankato physician who was being driven under by federal restrictions on the production and movement of his product (an alleged source of marihuana), moved successively from the Narcotics Bureau to the Commodity Credit Corporation to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to the War Production Board and returned to Mankato without a final decision on his appeal.

Almost of necessity, the burgeoning administrative system has developed its own channels of politics and control. AAA is the prime example, and despite its problems with an unsympathetic and disinterested membership, it has shown some promise as a method of adjusting national administration to local circumstance. Similarly with the local cooperatives (REA, PCA, and NFLA). A case can also be made for the policy of recruiting local staff locally, as adopted by the post office, the Employment Service, the federal and state courts, the Farm Security Administration, and a number of other agencies. Less can be said for the practice of establishing local advisory committees: Earl Klenk, ECF administrator, was frank to admit that he operated independently of the three-man group which he was required to appoint as his loan consultants.

Without analyzing in detail the relative merits of these attempts, it is clear that they do not help to solve the basic problem of providing a method of control which will embrace the entire process of government within the community. They are still piecemeal ventures, individual groups of citizens concentrating upon separate aspects of administration. The problems of centralization remain: on the administrative side, how to coordinate or at least correlate the sprawling local activities of three levels of government; on a broader plane, how to adapt the tradition of local self-rule to the newer circumstance and machinery of big government at the community level.

## V

It would be comforting to believe that the problems brought on by the new centralization are of a transitional nature and soon to be resolved. In large part, they are not. They stem from three inescapable facts, none of them likely to undergo radical change: the inevitable divergence of local and central points of view, the logic of larger and varying administrative areas, and the characteristic if not essential looseness of the American three-level system. Consider them in order:

Granted that the community is slowly adjusting to its governmental merger with state and nation—and one can see evidences of that adjustment in the new outlook of the county's business leaders as well as in the conversion of Commissioner Minks—there will always be a certain amount of conflict between local and central interests. The conflict will be economic, insofar as Blue Earth remains prosperous and agricultural; it will be social inasmuch as the community reflects its cultural background and its stable, conservative, and independent way of life. Even if one could envisage a complete congruence of economic and social interests, there would still remain psychological barriers to overcome—citizen apathy and apprehension, the schizophrenic habit of asking for service and ultimately resenting the process by which it is given, the urge for self-government "no matter what."

Such self-government is impossible: government of the sort the community needs could not be made completely local. One need only note the character of the modern economy and the impracticability of building highways, waging war, taxing corporate



and other income, influencing prices, and meeting emergencies on a county basis. Even where these services can be administratively decentralized, areas cannot always be worked out to coincide with the traditional boundaries of local government. And administrative decentralization, with or without the trimmings of AAA-like referendums and local committees, is only half the loaf the community would like, which is control of policy and the purse, the authority to act or not to act, the power to tax or not to tax.

It is also a hard fact (those who wrote the Constitution deemed it a virtue) that the American system is designed to produce friction. By structure and tradition, each of the three levels is expected to be faithful to its own interests, and within limits to act independently. Flexibility is one of the resulting virtues; another—stressed by the original but not so much by the latter-day Federalists—is friction itself. The theory justifying it is the familiar one of checks and balances. The result is a guarantee that social and political change will not be unilaterally, arbitrarily, or too hastily accomplished.

To sum up, government within Blue Earth County will always be more centralized, less orderly, and less malleable than local residents would have it; and the community will always be more than a little nettled and perplexed. But to change the situation in any basic way would be to change environment, human nature, and the essential character of American government and society.

## VI

Seeing the trend of government at the local level, one can react in one or both of two ways. As a thoughtful observer, one can be quietly optimistic. Seeing the play of larger forces, the small part that one community may have in national action, the inevitability of friction and divided interest, but withal the inner logic of a system driven by myriad hands in a direction largely dictated by technology and by the instincts of survival, common sense, and compassion—seeing all this, one may conclude that the natural product of crosscurrents and interests and circumstance is a lumbering but moving process of maintaining an equilibrium which expresses as well and as freely as any system can the general will of a diverse society. Government may be large, it must be; government may be complex, it must be; the community may be outvoted, little-considered, and by-passed, it would be asking that men be gods to have it otherwise.

But to stop at observation is to retreat: there is a place for action as well as for insight, for reform as well as for understanding. One balancing factor in this equilibrium is the force of innovation and criticism. Demonstrably, government is complicated and disjointed: it may be made less so; admittedly, the community is restive: its adjustment to the changing governmental scene may be made less difficult.

## VII

There is room for conscious change, and developments themselves suggest a promising approach. With government in the community now the common concern of all three levels, everything possible should be done to encourage cooperative relations among different levels and agencies of government, and to emphasize functions rather than prerogatives and jurisdictions.

It is much easier to preach cooperation than to secure it; and in the growing literature on the subject, one can detect more than a little of the messianic. As has been seen, the great spurs to cooperation are emergencies and the awareness of great common tasks. To produce the spirit of cooperation in more normal times is an extremely slow and delicate business.

Essentially the task is one of education—of breaking down the barriers of prejudice and misinformation, and broadening the view individual citizens and officials have of the governmental process. The experience of the Council on Intergovernmental Relations in Blue Earth County suggests that the project may not be impracticable or unrewarding. There are a number of suggestions for cooperative action which the frictions of the developmental process bring to the smoldering point but never kindle: and in the presence of a catalyst—whether it be a council like CIR, a convener as suggested by John Gaus, or a county land-use committee—they may catch fire. An outstanding example is the county system of supervising assessments, the adoption of which in Blue Earth County and later throughout the state came eighty years after it was first recommended by a state commissioner of taxation.

The idea of a catalytic agent is but one of a number of possible attacks on the problem. To it has been added the proposal for a "community budget," a comprehensive account of federal, state, and local activity and finance within the county area. As shown earlier, the proposal goes beyond what is currently possible with available data; but it is a suggestion which even in a rough form might well be implemented. In the first place, such an account would provide the broader picture of community government which is now entirely lacking and it would do so in the financial terms so meaningful to the Blue Earth citizen. Second, it would help bring administrators of the various programs together, or at least acquaint them with each other's activity.

From a long-range point of view, attention might be given to revising high school and grade school courses in civics, if for no other reason than to discard the stereotyped descriptions of federalism and to show the role which state and national governments must and do play in the life of the community.

Education is only one part of the program. The other is to promote working relationships among the three levels, and among units and agencies at the same level. This second objective can only be achieved by adopting a functional approach—the one way of cutting through jurisdictional barriers and administrative mass to establish the necessary community of interest.

A corollary of this rule is that wherever possible the number of jurisdictions should be reduced, although here one runs into a host of perplexing problems. Among local units, school districts are most vulnerable; but they are also the most difficult to readjust, not only because of emotional loyalties but also because of physical factors such as the location of roads, condition and size of buildings, varying number of pupils, and so forth. Still it is clear that a decision like that referred to earlier—the refusal of neighboring districts to join in replacing outworn school buildings—should not be respected by the state when granting aids.

To abolish townships would be more a gesture of impatience than a real aid to co-operation. Mostly they concern themselves with functions which the community has not yet taken very seriously; where their functions are more important, as witness highways and property assessments, they will be drawn by a slow process of absorption into the county system. In the meantime the costs involved are negligible—certainly nothing compared to the psychological benefits they provide.<sup>14</sup> Villages and cities

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<sup>14</sup>The following excerpts from a letter by E. Lester Schwarz, March 21, 1948, are worth quoting for their reasoned expression of a townsman's point of view:

"The transfer of highways from the township to the county system is in general regarded with favor. That seems to be a function that the county can administer more efficiently. It is probable that before too many years the township will have in its

serve only local purposes and are not so situated as to suggest consolidation—the one exception being the case of Mankato and its sister city North Mankato, which are separated by 300 feet of river and a county line.

A more fundamental question, and one which is often ignored in the literature on reorganization, is whether existing local units could absorb more of the services now performed by administrative agencies of the central governments, thereby serving the double purpose of reducing the number of jurisdictions and of further vitalizing local government. Despite the recent trend toward bigness, the need for small areas of administration is not diminishing, particularly in the field of conservation. Even granting the need for emergency action and sudden shifts in policy, one may wonder about the wisdom of abolishing or by-passing traditional units merely to replace them with administrative agencies of the central governments—the classic example being AAA.

The alternative of integration, represented by the agricultural extension and social welfare programs, is an encouraging one and where feasible is much to be preferred to an increase in direct state and federal administration. Certainly in Blue Earth County, local units—especially the county—are capable of taking on a greater administrative load than they now carry. Their inadequacy is one of organization and finance rather than basic incompetence or incurable parochialism.

This suggestion of further integration is not offered as a panacea, and is admittedly an act of faith. But the faith is founded on the interpretation of a century of experience which shows that local units in Blue Earth County, when given a job and the money to do it with, and when adequately supervised, rise to the occasion and mature quickly to their responsibilities. Two instances where integration seems justifiable are the following.

1. Inspectional work. For example, Mankato is already providing a milk inspection service which federal authorities have rated excellent; yet both state and federal governments duplicate certain phases of this work. It would be possible to consolidate these inspectional services, and in addition perhaps those made of local hotels and restaurants by the state health and agriculture department, in this case as part of a county health unit.

2. Farm credit. Interestingly enough, Director S. P. Lindsey of the Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Division suggested some time ago that the county be assigned responsibility for dispensing ECF loans.<sup>15</sup> There seem to be equally good reasons for the county to administer FSA loans and other emergency credit services, especially

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system only branch roads and cartways. I regard this as a proper transfer of a function from a small governmental unit to a larger one and illustrates that improvement can be and is being made within the present set-up. To me such orderly and relatively slow transfer is preferable to any abrupt and radical change.

"I am of the opinion that local problems can usually be handled best locally. We may at times sacrifice efficiency by reason of the small size of our unit, but that disadvantage is outweighed by the fact that we make and carry out our own decisions rather than those of a board or commission or bureau many miles away. Our present system is practically free from graft and the opportunity for graft. In my time there has never been a hint of graft or scandal of any kind in our township administration. There may be criticism of policy or judgment but never of official honesty. The system of open meetings and public records makes graft next to impossible."

<sup>15</sup>Statement of S. P. Lindsey, Jr., before the House Committee on Agriculture, hearings on H.R. 4384, May 15, 1944.



when the fact is recalled that the county has already been entrusted with the much more responsible job of administering relief and welfare.

Both suggestions are illustrative, and both involve the county—further evidence of that unit's growing potential as the focal unit of local government and as the principal instrument for state and federal action in the community. Obviously, the county is not equipped now to handle such a role; and its reorganization therefore becomes a "must" item on the agenda of reform. The program for reorganization is clear: abolishing many of the present elective officers and making them appointive;<sup>16</sup> transforming the board of commissioners into a legislative body; and introducing a manager.<sup>17</sup>

Reorganization can be stimulated by the increased use of grants—a tactic which so far, it should be said for the record, has not been detrimental to local self-rule. Significantly, the next move in this direction has been started by Commissioner Minks, long the arch-enemy of such action. His proposal for a consolidated county health service is now (1945) waiting for a reluctant state legislature to agree on the necessary enabling act. If and when the project goes through, it will provide an excellent example of the cooperative and functional approach. Funds will be provided jointly by local, state, and federal governments; service will include public health nursing, sanitary engineering, and full-time enforcement work (the latter supplanting the haphazard action of towns and villages).

To judge from local experience, integration should be the first thought when implementing any new federal or state program. Where for reasons of emergency, politics, or the nature of the function, integration is not possible, every effort should be made to keep administrative agencies within the community working in harmony. The discordant notes of recent agricultural programs have been particularly jarring, and have done little to promote cooperation either within the federal family or among related state and local organizations.

Achieving cooperation in agriculture will not be easy, especially in view of the deepening antagonisms among Farm Bureau, Extension, and AAA personnel. Some promise lies in the direction of consolidating credit facilities, as projected in the now familiar Cooley bill, but any major attempt at coordination, such as the "temple of agriculture" so often recommended (joint housing of all local agricultural agencies in a county, with the agent as keeper of the keys), will have to await the resolution of basic policy differences and a major reorganization at higher levels.

As for keeping order and promoting cooperation among the whole gamut of units and agencies in the county, one may find some comfort in the fact that many agencies included in the total appear but briefly in the area and then move on; also that most agencies prefer peaceful coexistence and perhaps too readily confine themselves to a safe but unimaginative work routine. Conflict is avoided; sadly enough, so is contact.

To encourage contact, greater emphasis should be placed upon those informal processes which already operate as cohesive factors in the community: membership in local

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<sup>16</sup>Dr. Dahl, coroner, and Miss Farrish, court commissioner, have already recommended that their jobs be made appointive. Neither has campaigned for the office, both have been elected by write-in votes. Other county officials whose incomes are more substantial (especially the clerk of court and register of deeds) are all for the present system of election.

<sup>17</sup>Should federal and state grants to the county continue to increase, it might be advisable to appoint the manager as a joint officer of the three governments, having then the same status as the county agent.

service clubs, church groups, bowling leagues, and so forth. More has been accomplished at annual meetings of the Public Health Association and at the Mankato Golf Club to bring representatives of different jurisdictions together than through many of the contact points provided for by law.

Finally, there is good reason to question Minnesota's ban on partisan campaigns in state and local elections. In one fell swoop, the state has robbed the party of meaning at the local level and cut one of the strongest potential ties between local and central governments.

In summary, then, this study leads to three modest proposals for action:

1. Promote a broader perspective among citizens and public officers of the governmental process within the community, principally by improving the methods of reporting and by encouraging interaction among officials.

2. Clear the way for intergovernmental cooperation by stressing the common interests of the system—the functions which government performs rather than its jurisdictions and prerogatives.

3. By continued use of the grant-in-aid, and by supplementary devices of administrative reorganization, joint appointments, combined planning and consolidated reporting, work toward an integrated structure and program of government at the community level.

In accomplishing these objectives, particular measures of reform are secondary to cooperative attitudes and the continuous application of common sense. Harold Smith's visit with Blue Earth officials in 1946, his rustic simplicity, and his matter-of-fact approach to intergovernmental problems did more to break down the barriers to cooperation than twelve years of indoctrination and generous spending by the New Deal.





# Appendix

## "Government Locally"

### PART ONE: A DIRECTORY OF STATE AGENCIES

#### I. Resident in Blue Earth County

##### A. Agriculture

1. Dairy and food inspector
  - a. Parent agency: division of dairy and food inspection, department of agriculture, dairy, and food.
  - b. Local office: None, other than inspector's residence in Mankato.
  - c. Personnel: One inspector.
  - d. Area served: 7 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, LeSueur, Nicollet, Renville, Sibley, and Watonwan.
2. Field veterinary service
  - a. Parent agency: livestock sanitary board.
  - b. Local office: field veterinarian's office in Mapleton.
  - c. Personnel: One field veterinarian and a varying number of veterinarians who participate on a part-time basis.
  - d. Area served: 13 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Freeborn, Jackson, LeSueur, Martin, Nicollet, Nobles, Sibley, Waseca, and Watonwan.
3. Weed and seed inspection supervisor
  - a. Parent agency: division of weed and seed inspection, department of agriculture, dairy, and food.
  - b. Local office: None, other than supervisor's residence in Mankato.
  - c. Personnel: One supervisor.
  - d. Area served: 11 counties—Blue Earth, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Houston, LeSueur, Mower, Olmsted, Steele, and Waseca.

##### B. Commerce

4. Concentration point for livestock weighing
  - a. Parent agency: livestock weighing department, railroad and warehouse commission.
  - b. Local office: Mankato Battle Market.
  - c. Personnel: One weigher.
  - d. Area served: Mankato shipping community, an area with a radius of approximately 60 miles.

##### C. Conservation

5. Game warden
  - a. Parent agency: division of game and fish, department of conservation.

- b. Local office: None, other than warden's residence in Mankato.
- c. Personnel: One warden.
- d. Area served: During the war years, shared the area south of Minneapolis with one other warden.

##### D. Education

6. Mankato State Teachers College (and Training School)
  - a. Parent agency: state teachers college board.
  - b. Personnel: President and 56 instructors: 23 non-instructional help, full-time; 40 non-instructional help, part-time.
  - c. Area served: No limitation.

##### E. Health

7. District health unit No. 2
  - a. Parent agency: division of district health units, department of health.
  - b. Local office: Blue Earth County Courthouse.
  - c. Personnel: Director, public health nurse supervisor, sanitary engineer, and clerk.
  - d. Area served: 13 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Freeborn, Jackson, LeSueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Steele, Waseca, and Watonwan.

##### F. Highways

8. Seventh district, division of road construction
  - a. Parent agency: department of highways.
  - b. Local office: Engineer's office and crew headquarters, both in Mankato.
  - c. Personnel: Inspector, project engineer, four engineering aides, 1 part-time clerk, and 8 to 20 seasonal help.
  - d. Area served: 13 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, LeSueur, Martin, Nicollet, Nobles, Rock, Sibley, Waseca, and Watonwan.
9. Fourteenth district, division of road maintenance
  - a. Parent agency: department of highways.
  - b. Local office: Mankato.
  - c. Personnel: District maintenance engineer, district foreman, 11 shop and field foremen, 20 highway.

- sectionmen, 17 section helpers, 4 heavy equipment operators, 2 maintenance equipment operators, one janitor, 5 laborers, 20 to 50 part-time laborers, office manager, and 3 clerks.
- d. Area served: 6 counties—Blue Earth, Faribault, LeSueur, Nicollet, Sibley, and Waseca.
10. Seventh District Laboratory
- a. Parent agency: division of materials and research, department of highways.
- b. Local office: Mankato.
- c. Personnel: District soils engineer, assistant and clerk. (Positions vacant during the war.)
- d. Area served: The 13 counties of the seventh construction district.
- H. Judiciary
11. Court of the sixth judicial district
- a. Parent agency: state supreme court.
- b. Local chambers: County courthouse in both Blue Earth and Watonwan counties.
- c. Personnel: District judge, court reporter, and clerk (county clerk of court).
- d. Area served: 2 counties—Blue Earth and Watonwan. Judge is elected jointly by the two counties.
- H. Labor and Industry
12. Eighth district, division of boiler inspection
- a. Parent agency: department of labor and industry.
- b. Local office: None, other than inspector's residence in Mankato.
- c. Personnel: One inspector.
- d. Area served: Blue Earth County.
13. Claims office for unemployment compensation
- a. Parent agency: division of workmen's compensation, department of labor and industry.
- b. Local office: Mankato U.S. Employment Service.
- c. Personnel: Claims are processed by a member of the USES staff, and are relayed from that office to the state department (1945).
- d. Area served: 5 counties—Blue Earth, LeSueur, Nicollet, Waseca, and Watonwan.
- I. Law Enforcement
14. Patrol station, second district highway patrol
- a. Parent agency: division of highway patrol, department of highways.
- b. Local station: Mankato.
- c. Personnel: District sergeant and station patrolman.
- d. Area served: The Mankato station is one of 11 stations located throughout the 28 counties comprising the second district. District headquarters are at Hopkins, 75 miles northeast of Mankato.
- J. Military and Wartime
15. Mankato unit, Minnesota State Guard
- a. Parent agency: adjutant general's office.
- b. Local office: Mankato Armory.
- c. Personnel: Commanding officer, regimental clerk, two custodians; 135th Infantry Regiment.
- d. Area drawn upon: Depends upon convenience of volunteers.
- K. Motor Vehicle Licensing
16. Registration point, motor vehicle licenses
- a. Parent agency: motor vehicle division, office of the secretary of state.
- b. Local office: Mankato.
- c. Personnel: Deputy registrar and assistant, both on a fee basis.
- d. Area served: Convenience of applicants.
- L. Recreation
17. Minneopa State Park
- a. Parent agency: division of state parks, department of conservation.
- b. Location: South Bend Township.
- c. Personnel: park superintendent, patrolman, and stores clerk (seasonal).
- M. Welfare
18. Parole and probation officer
- a. Parent agency: board of parole, division of social welfare, department of social security.
- b. Local office: Blue Earth County Courthouse
- c. Personnel: Parole officer and one part-time clerk.
- d. Area served: 17 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, LeSueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, Scott, and Watonwan.
- II. Serving Blue Earth County from Established Districts, with Offices Located Elsewhere\*
- A. Agriculture
1. Egg and poultry inspection, districts No. 3 and No. 4
- a. Parent agency: egg and poultry section, division of marketing, department of agriculture, dairy, and food.
- b. District office: None—inspector works out of the central office in Minneapolis.
- c. Personnel: One inspector in each district.
- d. Area served: Blue Earth county is divided longitudinally by the two districts, Mankato and the eastern half lying in district No. 4. District No. 3 covers 27 counties in

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\*Ivan Hinderaker, Administrative Districts and Field Offices of the Minnesota State Government (1943) provided the basic material for the two sections which follow. Wherever possible, this material was brought up to date by interviews with the administrative officers concerned, or was checked in current sources such as the Minnesota Legislative Manual and the House of Representatives Interim Committee on State Administration and Employment, Report to the 1945 Minnesota Legislature.

southwestern Minnesota, either wholly or in part; while No. 4 includes 24 counties in the southeastern section of the state.

2. Wholesale produce dealers inspection, district No. 1

- a. Parent agency: Wholesale produce dealers section, division of marketing, department of agriculture, dairy, and food.
- b. District office: None—inspector works out of the central office in St. Paul.
- c. Personnel: One inspector.
- d. Area served: 15 counties—Blue Earth, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, LeSueur, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, and Winona.

B. Commerce

3. Bank examining, district No. 5

- a. Parent agency: examining subdivision, division of banking, department of commerce.
- b. District office: None—examiner works out of the central office in St. Paul.
- c. Personnel: Examiner and one assistant.
- d. Area served: 13 counties—Blue Earth, Faribault, Freeborn, Hennepin, Isanti, LeSueur, Martin, Nicollet, Rice, Scott, Sherburne, Steele, and Waseca (exclusive of Minneapolis and Owatonna, which are covered by a separate crew of examiners).

4. Fire marshal, district No. 3

- a. Parent agency: fire marshal section, division of insurance, department of commerce.
- b. District office: City Fire Station, St. Paul.
- c. Personnel: One fire marshal.
- d. Area served: 7 counties completely—Blue Earth, Faribault, Freeborn, LeSueur, Scott, Sibley, and Waseca; 13 counties partially—Brown, Carver, Dakota, Dodge, Hennepin, Martin, McLeod, Mower, Nicollet, Renville, Rice, Steele, and Watonwan.

5. Local grain warehouse inspection, districts No. 2 and No. 3

- a. Parent agency: local grain warehouse department, railroad and warehouse commission.
- b. District office: None—inspector works out of the central office in St. Paul.
- c. Personnel: One inspector.
- d. Area served: District No. 2 covers 9 counties entirely—Brown, Carver, LeSueur, Martin, McLeod, Nicollet, Scott, Sibley and Watonwan; 9 counties partially—Blue Earth, Cottonwood, Dakota, Hennepin, Jackson, Redwood, Renville, Rice, and Waseca. Blue Earth county is divided by the two districts in such a way that No. 2 includes only the southeast tip of the county.

6. Weights and measures inspection, district No. 5

- a. Parent agency: department of weights and measures, railroad and warehouse commission.
- b. District office: None—inspector works out of the central office in St. Paul.
- c. Personnel: One inspector.
- d. Area served: 17 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Sibley, Watonwan, and Yellow Medicine.

7. Motor bus and truck inspection, district No. 7

- a. Parent agency: motor bus and truck department, railroad and warehouse commission.
- b. District office: None—inspector works out of the central office in St. Paul.
- c. Personnel: One inspector.
- d. Area served: 13 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Freeborn, LeSueur, Martin, McLeod, Nicollet, Renville, Sibley, Steele, Waseca, and Watonwan.

C. Conservation

8. Fish propagation, district No. 2

- a. Parent agency: bureau of fish propagation, division of game and fish, department of conservation.
- b. District office: St. Peter, Minnesota.
- c. Personnel: Hatchery superintendent and one assistant.
- d. Area served: 22 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Freeborn, Jackson, LeSueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Sibley, Steele, Waseca, Watonwan, and Yellow Medicine.

D. Education

9. Vocational rehabilitation, district No. 1

- a. Parent agency: division of vocational rehabilitation, department of education.
- b. District office: None—counselor works out of the central office in St. Paul.
- c. Personnel: One counselor.
- d. Area served: 26 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Dakota, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Jackson, LeSueur, Martin, Mower, Murray, Nobles, Olmsted, Pipestone, Rice, Rock, Scott, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan, and Winona.

E. Health

10. Hotel inspection, district No. 2

- a. Parent agency: division of hotel inspection, department of health.
- b. District office: None—inspector works out of the central office in St. Paul.
- c. Personnel: One inspector.



- d. Area served: 16 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, LeSueur, Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Rock, Scott, Sibley, Waseca, and Watonwan.
- F. Liquor Control
  - 11. Investigation and enforcement, district No. 4
    - a. Parent agency: division of investigation and enforcement, department of liquor control.
    - b. District headquarters: None—agent works out of the central office in St. Paul.
    - c. Personnel: One agent.
    - d. Area served: 7 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, LeSueur, Martin, Nicollet, and Watonwan.
- G. Law Enforcement
  - 12. Criminal apprehension investigation, district No. 1
    - a. Parent agency: investigation division, bureau of criminal apprehension, office of the governor.
    - b. District office: Rochester.
    - c. Personnel: One investigator.
    - d. Area served: 11 counties—Blue Earth, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Steele, Waseca, and Winona.
- H. Motor Vehicle Investigation
  - 13. Motor vehicle inspection, southern district
    - a. Parent agency: motor vehicle division, office of the secretary of state.
    - b. District office: None—inspector works out of the central office in St. Paul.
    - c. Personnel: One inspector.
    - D. Area served: Southern half of the state.
- I. Taxation
  - 14. Petroleum inspection, districts No. 7, No. 8, and No. 9
    - a. Parent agency: petroleum division, department of taxation.
    - b. District office: None—inspectors work out of the central office in St. Paul.
    - c. Personnel: Each district has one inspector.
    - d. Area served: Blue Earth County is trisected by the three districts, each of which covers two or three more counties.
- J. Welfare
  - 15. Care of crippled children, district No. 6
    - a. Parent agency: bureau for crippled children, medical services unit, division of social welfare, department of social security.
    - b. District office: None—public health nurse works out of the central office in St. Paul.
    - c. Personnel: One public health nurse.
    - d. Area served: 12 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Rock, and Watonwan.
- 16. Investigation of the insane, district No. 3
  - a. Parent agency: subdivision of insane, division of public institutions, department of social security.
  - b. Field office: None—investigator works out of the central office in St. Paul.
  - c. Personnel: One investigator.
  - d. Area served: 26 counties—Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Douglas, Faribault, Grant, Jackson, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Stevens, Swift, Todd, Traverse, Watonwan, and Yellow Medicine.
- III. Serving Blue Earth County Directly out of Central State Office—Regularly, Intermittently, upon Complaint or Request
  - A. Agriculture
    - 1. Division of feed and fertilizer control, department of agriculture, dairy, and food. (Two inspectors are employed by the state to investigate complaints on a state-wide basis.)
    - 2. Nursery inspection section, state entomologist's office, department of agriculture, dairy, and food. (Three inspectors work out of their headquarters at the university farm.)
    - 3. Apiary inspection section, state entomologist's office, department of agriculture, dairy, and food. (Several state inspectors are hired seasonally to investigate beekeepers throughout the state. They are aided by local appointees acting as "spotters.")
    - 4. Hatchery inspection, poultry improvement board. (The secretary and executive officer personally inspect state hatcheries one to three times annually.)
  - B. Commerce
    - 5. Aeronautics commission (Apart from issuing regulations, the commission conducts investigations of accidents and of violations.)
    - 6. Small loan and credit union examination, division of banking, department of commerce. (Examiners cover the state at large.)
    - 7. Building and loan association examination, division of banking, department of commerce. (Examiners cover the state at large.)
    - 8. Insurance examination, insurance division, department of commerce. (Interstate companies are examined through interstate agreement. Intrastate companies are examined by state examiners at large.)
    - 9. Securities examination, division of securities, department of commerce. (An examiner, an auditor, and an attorney-investigator cover the state at large.)
    - 10. Railroad signal department, railroad and warehouse commission. (Investigators check complaints about and supervise the installation of railroad signal devices throughout the state.)

## C. Conservation

11. Planning and construction unit, division of water resources and engineering, department of conservation. (Engineers and field crews are available to survey, plan and construct water conservation projects.)
12. Gauge control, division of water resources and engineering, department of conservation. (150 gauge-readers have been appointed on a fee basis to serve localities within the state.)
13. Land, minerals, and forestry divisions, department of conservation. (Blue Earth County, as a part of the state's undistricted area, is serviced only upon request.)
14. Rough fish removal, bureau of fisheries, division of game and fish, department of conservation. (Removal of rough fish either by contract or by two-man crew hired by the state.)
15. Administration, bureau of administration, department of commerce. (Seizure clerk conducts sale of confiscated equipment. This bureau also employs two auditors to examine the license accounts of the county auditor.)

## D. Education\*

16. Rural schools inspection, division of rural schools, department of education. (Six inspectors at large examine rural schools and school buses.)
17. High and graded schools inspection, division of high and graded schools, department of education. (Three directors at large inspect elementary graded and high schools.)
18. Division of physical and health education inspection, department of education. (One supervisor covers the state's secondary and elementary schools.)
19. Division of special education inspection, department of education. (The director of the division is responsible for inspecting classes for handicapped children.)
20. Division of school buildings and business Administration, department of education. (The director consults local school authorities on their building plans and problems.)
21. Library inspection, division of libraries, department of education. (One supervisor of school libraries covers the state at large, inspecting and supervising both school and public libraries.)
22. Vocational education supervision, division of vocational education, department of education. (State supervisors organize and control classes throughout the state, under terms of the George-Deen Act.)

## E. Examining Boards\*\*

23. Board of accountancy, office of the governor. (No field staff. Issues CPA certificates, investigates violations, and polices the profession.)
24. Board of registration for architects, engineers, and land surveyors, office of the governor.

25. Board of barber examiners, office of the governor. (The three board members and two inspectors examine barber shops throughout the state.)
26. Board of chiropody examiners, office of the governor. (Any one of the five board members may be called upon for investigation of complaints.)
27. Board of chiropractic examiners, office of the governor. (Part-time investigators are employed where necessary to check on reported violations.)
28. Board of dental examiners, office of the governor. (No field staff; the board members handle whatever investigational work is required.)
29. Board of electricity, office of the governor. (24 inspectors are assigned to REA projects throughout the state on a fee basis. Two field representatives travel the state at large to settle any differences of opinion that may arise between electrical contractors and inspectors.)
30. Board of hairdressing and beauty culture examiners, office of the governor. (One inspector is assigned to the cities and villages of the state other than St. Paul and Minneapolis.)
31. Board of law examiners, state supreme court. (The board is called upon to investigate complaints against practicing members of the state bar.)
32. Board of medical examiners, office of the governor. (Employs an attorney for investigation and prosecution.)
33. Board of examiners of nurses, office of the governor. (The director of nursing education surveys schools of nursing and polices the profession within the state.)
34. Board of optometry, office of the governor. (Its full-time secretary serves as a statewide investigator. Local optometrists in different sections act as "spotters.")
35. Board of osteopathy, office of the governor. (Polices the state osteopathic profession.)
36. Board of pharmacy, office of the governor. (One full-time inspector travels over the state.)
37. Board of veterinary examiners, office of the governor. (The executive secretary of the board investigates violations and checks license renewals.)

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\*The following seven units have already been referred to in the discussion of state control over local government. They are included here as a special case, since, strictly speaking, they are to be classified as instruments of supervision. However, they may also be considered part of state government locally inasmuch as their work is analogous to that of a local officer—the county superintendent of schools.

\*\*Each board examines and licenses candidates for admission to the profession involved.

## F. Health

38. Division of administration, department of health. (Four investigators at large are assigned to administer the Plumbers Licensing Law, the Embalmers and Funeral Directors Licensing Law, the Narcotics Law, and the regulations pertaining to public health nuisances.)
39. Division of canning and beverage inspection, department of agriculture, dairy, and food. (One full-time inspector for the state at large inspects breweries and bottling works.)
40. Cold storage inspection, division of marketing, department of agriculture, dairy, and food. (One field inspector covers the state twice each year.)
41. Quarantine officer, livestock sanitary board. (The state quarantine officer makes investigational trips throughout the state whenever the need arises.)
42. Division of child hygiene, department of health. (Six nursing instructors spend their time in the field teaching related courses.)

## G. Highways

43. Drivers license investigation, drivers license bureau, division of traffic and safety, department of highways. (One investigator operates in the field.)
44. Traffic survey, division of traffic and safety. (Crew of four employees investigates and removes traffic hazards.)
45. Signs survey, division of traffic and safety. (Crews of center-line markers, etc., cover the state's highways.)
46. Safety promotion, division of traffic and safety. (Two promoters in the field cooperate with the Minnesota safety council in organizing local safety committees.)
47. Bridge inspection, division of bridges, department of highways. (Field inspectors supervise construction projects.)
48. Bridge maintenance, division of bridges. (Four bridge maintenance crews operate over the state.)
49. Shop inspection, division of bridges. (Two field men inspect metals and other materials going into bridge construction.)
50. Road materials use, division of materials and research, department of highways. (A staff of field engineers is employed to visit all construction and maintenance projects, to advise on the use of materials and to recommend improved practices.)

## H. Labor and Industry

51. Division of accident prevention, department of labor and industry. (17 inspectors from the central office cover the state.)
52. Women and children employment investigation, division of women and children, department of labor and industry. (11 inspectors at large,

six of them paid by the federal government.)

53. Division of workmen's compensation, department of labor and industry. (Hearings of contested claims are held before a referee, who, with a reporter, travels from the central office to the most convenient location for the parties concerned.)
54. Division of steamfitting standards, department of labor and industry. (The full-time secretary of the board of steamfitting standards handles inspections over the entire state.)
55. Conciliation and arbitration, conciliation division, department of labor and industry. (Three full-time conciliators are aided by 20 special conciliators in handling labor disputes throughout the state. In addition, arbitrators are chosen by conciliators to hold hearings anywhere in the state to suit the convenience of the parties involved. Where the dispute involves the public interest, the governor appoints a three-man fact-finding commission.)
56. Apprenticeship training promotion, division of voluntary apprenticeship, department of labor and industry. (The director of the division, together with four field representatives of the corresponding federal agency, cover the state in their promotional work.)

## I. Law Enforcement

57. Criminal identification, identification division, bureau of criminal apprehension. (Agents may be called anywhere in the state.)

## J. Taxation

58. Gross earnings tax division, department of the public examiner. (An annual audit is made of telephone, telegraph, railroad, and express companies.)
59. General property and gross earnings tax subdivision, general administrative division, department of taxation. (Administers gross earnings tax upon telephone, telegraph, railroad, and express companies.)
60. Electric light and power companies subdivision, general administrative division, department of taxation. (A specialized engineer makes appraisals of companies within the state.)
61. Moneys and credits tax subdivision, general administrative division, department of taxation. (Three investigators check county probate records for untaxed moneys and credits.)
62. Corporation and individual income tax return auditing section, income tax division, department of taxation. (14 corporations and 17 individual tax examiners investigate returns of Minnesota taxpayers both within and without the state.)

## K. Welfare

63. Education of the blind, public assistance and welfare services unit, division of social welfare, department of



social security. (One home teacher is assigned at large.)

64. Subdivision of parole of delinquent children, division of public institutions, department of social security. (Supervisors are assigned at large to investigate and to follow up juvenile paroles.)

## PART TWO: A DIRECTORY OF FEDERAL AGENCIES

### I. Resident in Blue Earth County

#### A. Agriculture

1. Blue Earth County AAA Committee
  - a. Parent agency: Agricultural adjustment Administration, Food Production Administration, War Food Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Also represents Commodity Credit Corporation.
  - b. Local office: Mankato.
  - c. Personnel: Three-man county committee, 4 part-time field men, chief clerk, secretary-treasurer, two clerks, and the 23 township committees.
  - d. Area served: Blue Earth County.
2. Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Office
  - a. Parent agency: Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Section, Farm Credit Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
  - b. Local office: Mankato Post Office building.
  - c. Personnel: Field supervisor, one per-diem clerk, and three-man advisory loan committee (identical with AAA committee).
  - d. Area served: 11 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, Carver, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Martin, McLeod, Nicollet, Sibley, and Watonwan.
3. Farm Security Administration, district office
  - a. Parent agency: Farm Security Administration, Food Production Administration, War Food Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
  - b. Local office: Mankato Post Office building.
  - c. Personnel: County supervisor, clerk, and three-man advisory committee in each of 3 counties.
  - d. Area served: 3 counties—Blue Earth, LeSueur, and Nicollet.
4. National Farm Loan Association Group 227
  - a. Parent agency: Federal Land Bank and Land Bank Commissioner, Farm Credit Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
  - b. Local office: Mankato.
  - c. Personnel: Group 227 includes four associations which have pooled their administrative facilities but have retained their separate panels of officers. Each association elects a president and four other board members; together they employ a secretary-treasurer, an assistant, and a clerk.

- d. Area served: 7 counties, under the four associations, Blue Earth, Waseca, Madelia, and Nicollet-LeSueur.

#### 5. Production Credit Association

- a. Parent agency: Production Credit Corporation, Farm Credit Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- b. Local office: Mankato.
- c. Personnel: Five-man board of directors, secretary-treasurer, assistant, bookkeeper, clerk-steno, and two field representatives.
- d. Area served: The Mankato headquarters, with its New Ulm, Gaylord, Springfield, Waseca, and New Richland field offices, serves the five counties of Blue Earth, Brown, Nicollet, Sibley, and Waseca.

#### B. Commerce and Communications

#### 6. Blue Earth-Nicollet REA cooperative

- a. Parent agency: Rural Electrification Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- b. Local office: Mankato.
- c. Personnel: Five-man board of directors, secretary, treasurer, four clerks, and eight on field crew.
- d. Area served: Blue Earth and Nicollet counties entirely; Sibley and LeSueur counties extensively; and five other counties partially.

#### 7. Mankato Post Office

- a. Parent agency: U.S. Post Office Department
- b. Personnel: Postmaster, assistant, and 52 full-time employees.
- c. Area served: Mankato, four rural routes, four star routes, and one substation in North Mankato.

- 8 and 9. Post offices with assistant postmasters and with rural routes: Lake Crystal, with estimated personnel of seven; Eagle Lake, with estimated personnel of six.

- 10-15. Post offices with rural routes but without an assistant postmaster: Mapleton, Good Thunder, Pemberton, Garden City, Amboy, and Madison Lake, with total estimated personnel of 30.

- 16-18. Post offices without assistant postmasters or rural routes: Cambria, Judson, Rapidan, and St. Clair, with total estimated personnel of 10.

#### 19. Postal inspectorate

- a. Parent agency: U.S. Post Office Department.
- b. Local office: Mankato Post Office building.
- c. Personnel: One inspector.
- d. Area served: Southern Minnesota.

#### C. Judiciary

#### 20. U.S. District Court, Second Division

- a. Parent agency: U.S. Supreme Court.
- b. Local Court: Mankato Post Office building.
- c. Personnel: District judge, deputy clerk, court commissioner, first assistant U.S. attorney, U.S.

- marshal, and the referee in bankruptcy. (Clerk, commissioner, and referee are Mankato residents; the others are from St. Paul.)
- d. Area served: 21 counties—Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Freeborn, Jackson, Lac qui Parle, LeSueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan, and Yellow Medicine.
- D. Labor
21. U.S. Employment Service
    - a. Parent agency: During the war War Manpower Commission, Office for Emergency Management, Executive Office of the President. Also Veterans' Retraining and Reemployment Administration, Office of War Mobilization. (See also State Agencies, claims office for unemployment compensation).
    - b. Local office: Mankato.
    - c. Personnel: Area director, office manager, one job analyst, four interviewers in the office, one itinerant interviewer, three stenographers, and one clerk.
    - d. Area served: 5 counties—Blue Earth, LeSueur, Nicollet, Waseca, and Watonwan.
- E. Military and Wartime
22. Blue Earth County draft boards, No. 1 and No. 2
    - a. Parent agency: Selective Service System, Office for Emergency Management, Executive Office of the President.
    - b. Local office: Mankato Post Office building.
    - c. Personnel: Draft board No. 1: Three-man board, chief clerk, appeal and reemployment agent, medical field agent, and veterans' employment representative. Draft board No. 2: Three-man draft board, two clerks, appeal agent, medical field agent, and veterans' employment agent.
    - d. Area served: Draft board No. 1 handles all county registrants living in Mankato and north of Highway 14; board No. 2 the remainder.
  23. Selective Service District Appeal Board No. 2
    - a. Parent agency: Selective Service System.
    - b. Local office: Mankato Post Office building.
    - c. Personnel: Five-man board and one clerk.
    - d. Area served: 25 surrounding counties.
  24. Civil Air Patrol
    - a. Parent agency: Auxiliary to Army Air Forces, U.S. War Department.
    - b. Local office: None, other than business office of the lieutenant in charge.
    - c. Personnel: Lieutenant in charge (civilian).
    - d. Area served: The Mankato unit is made up of volunteers drawn from the surrounding area—no formal boundaries.
  25. U.S. Navy Recruiting Station
    - a. Local office: Mankato Post Office building.
    - b. Personnel: Two specialists first class.
    - c. Area served: 19 surrounding counties.
  26. WAC Recruiting Station
    - a. Parent agency: Women's Army Corps, U.S. War Department.
    - b. Local office: Mankato Post Office building.
    - c. Personnel: First lieutenant, sergeant, two corporals, and two privates.
    - d. Area served: 40 counties in southern Minnesota.
  27. Defense Plant Corporation Supervising Unit
    - a. Parent agency: Defense Plant Corporation, Reconstruction Finance Corporation, U.S. Department of Commerce.
    - b. Local office: Mankato Post Office building.
    - c. Personnel: Supervising engineer and one clerk.
    - d. Area served: 22 hemp plants in southern Minnesota and in northern Iowa, and a flax mill at Windom, Minnesota.
  28. Blue Earth County War Price and Rationing Board
    - a. Parent agency: Office of Price Administration.
    - b. Local office: Mankato.
    - c. Personnel: Commission-type board, each of whose seven members heads a citizen panel (of from five to seven members responsible for special items); chief clerk, nine full-time clerks, and over two hundred unpaid Victory Aides.
    - d. Area served: Blue Earth County. Thirteen application centers, including one at the Northern States Power Company in Mankato, are located at convenient points throughout the county. Each application center is manned by a clerk who is paid by the city or village in which he is located.
  29. Local organizations for civilian defense. (The city of Mankato was fully organized under the civilian defense program.)
- F. Taxation
30. Alcohol Tax Unit
    - a. Parent agency: Bureau of Internal Revenue, U.S. Treasury Department.
    - b. Local office: Mankato Post Office building.
    - c. Personnel: One enforcement officer.
    - d. Area served: Southwestern Minnesota.

31. Internal revenue agent
  - a. Parent agency: Bureau of Internal Revenue, U.S. Treasury Department.
  - b. Local office: Mankato Post Office building.
  - c. Personnel: One agent.
  - d. Area served: Southern Minnesota; into Wisconsin, Iowa, and the Dakotas upon assignment.
32. Internal revenue, Mankato collection zone
  - a. Parent agency: Bureau of Internal Revenue, U.S. Treasury Department.
  - b. Local office: Mankato Post Office building.
  - c. Personnel: Three deputy collectors and one clerk.
  - d. Area served: Four counties—Blue Earth, Nicollet, Sibley, and Watonwan.
33. Internal revenue, major collection zone
  - a. Parent agency: Bureau of Internal Revenue, U.S. Treasury Department.
  - b. Local office: Mankato Post Office building.
  - c. Personnel: Major zone deputy collector.
  - d. Area served: Supervises deputy collectors of the Mankato, Fairbault, Albert Lea, New Ulm, Fairmont, and Waseca zones.

II. With Itinerant Points Located in Blue Earth County, or Serving the County Locally, on a Regular Schedule or Intermittently.\*

A. Agriculture

1. Barberry eradication crew
  - a. Parent agency: Barberry Eradication Division, Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Agricultural Research Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
  - b. Headquarters: University of Minnesota, St. Paul campus.
  - c. Personnel: Foreman and four-man crew.
  - d. Schedule for Blue Earth County: The county was last worked over in 1936 by WPA crews, and probably will not be covered again for another 8-10 years, following the current drive.

B. Commerce

2. Bank examiners
  - a. Parent agency: comptroller of the currency, U.S. Treasury Department.
  - b. Headquarters: Federal Reserve Bank, Minneapolis.
  - c. Local coverage: All member banks at least once annually; similarly, all

banks insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

C. Law Enforcement

3. FBI investigators

- a. Parent agency: Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice.
- b. Headquarters: St. Paul.
- c. Schedule for Blue Earth County: Upon occasion.

D. Military and Wartime

4. Army liaison officer

- a. Parent agency: U.S. War Department.
- b. Headquarters: St. Paul.
- c. Schedule for Blue Earth County: Frequent visits to check on regular army property being used by the Home Guard regiment in Mankato.

5. Selective service coordinator

- a. Parent agency: Selective Service System.
- b. Headquarters: St. Paul.
- c. Schedule for Blue Earth County: Regular stops on his tour of 24 counties in southwestern Minnesota.

6. OPA investigators

- a. Parent agency: Office of Price Administration.
- b. Headquarters: St. Paul.
- c. Schedule for Blue Earth County: Upon occasion.

7. ODT investigators

- a. Parent agency: Office of Defense Transportation.
- b. Headquarters: St. Paul.
- c. Schedule for Blue Earth County: Upon occasion.

E. Welfare

8. Old age insurance representative

- a. Parent agency: Social Security Board, Federal Security Agency.
- b. Headquarters: Albert Lea, Minnesota.
- c. Personnel: District office manager and assistant.
- d. Schedule for Blue Earth County: The second and last Thursdays of each month, at the Mankato U.S. Employment Service.

\*It was not feasible to prepare an exhaustive list of federal agencies serving the community, chiefly because of the inordinate time and expense involved in making the necessary dragnet search of the area to locate field officers or undistricted personnel. The few examples which follow may serve to explain the sort of agency this classification is meant to include.



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## INTERVIEWS

The field research involved in this study was largely done while the author was employed as a staff member of the Blue Earth County Council on Intergovernmental Relations, during the spring and summer of 1944 and the summers of 1945 and 1946. It included interviews held with all federal, state, county, and Mankato city officials resident in the area, and with a selected number of town, village, and school officers. Interviews were also held with the heads of the major executive departments of the state, regional administrators of the federal government—particularly within the field of agriculture, and with representatives of local and state civic organizations.

## Agriculture

### Agricultural Adjustment Administration:

Fred Arneman, Chairman, Nicollet County AAA Committee  
Merle Avery, Chief of Special Services Section, Minnesota State AAA Committee  
John Brainard, Member, Minnesota State AAA Committee  
Walter Haedt, Chairman, Blue Earth County AAA Committee  
William Mutch, Member, Blue Earth County AAA Committee  
David Steel, Member, Blue Earth County AAA Committee  
Carle Steele, Member, Minnesota State AAA Committee  
Charles Stickney, Chairman, Minnesota State AAA Committee  
Mr. Zimmerman, Commodity Loan Section, Minnesota State AAA Committee

### Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine:

Mr. Bemis, Regional Supervisor, Division of Domestic and Foreign Plant Quarantine  
Ray Solseth, Crew Foreman, Barberry Eradication Division

### Extension Service:

Margery Evanson, Blue Earth County Home Demonstration Agent  
H. P. Hanson, Land-Use Planning Specialist, Minnesota Extension Division  
Joseph F. Kuehn, Assistant to the Director of Extension (Minnesota) in Charge of Budgets and Finance  
L. E. MacMillan, Blue Earth County Agent  
Skuli Rutford, Extension Specialist in Land-Use Planning and Agricultural Conservation, State Extension Division

### Farm Credit Administration:

Dr. Cavert, Director of Research, 7th District, Farm Credit Administration  
J. Keenan, Assistant to the General Agent in Charge of Coordination, 7th District Farm Credit Administration  
Earl Klenk, District Supervisor, Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Section (Mankato).

Lloyd I. Nelson, Assistant to the President of the Federal Land Bank, 7th District Farm Credit Administration  
C. E. Sawyer, Secretary-Treasurer, Group 227 National Farm Loan Association (Mankato).  
L. C. Streater, Regional Manager, Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Section, 7th District Farm Credit Administration  
H. P. Webb, Secretary-Treasurer, Mankato Production Credit Association

### Farm Security Administration:

Mr. Bremer, District Supervisor, Southwestern Area  
Fred J. Marshall, State Director  
Fred Stanford, County Supervisor (Mankato)  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Dairy, and Food:

George W. Christensen, Associate Marketing Specialist in Charge of Market News and Inspection  
R. A. Trovatten, Commissioner of the Department  
D. H. Williams, Auditor and Chief of Accounting Division

### Minnesota Experiment Station:

Andrew Boss, Acting Associate Director and Member of the Board of Directors, 7th District, Farm Credit Administration

### Office of Distribution, War Food Administration:

Fred Landin, Assistant to the Director, Minnesota Office

### Rural Electrification Administration:

C. E. Palmerston, Manager, Blue Earth-Nicollet Cooperative

### Others:

Dr. Cullen, Veterinarian in Charge, Blue Earth County (State-Federal) Cattle Testing Program  
H. L. Burdick, Editor, Vernon Center News;  
Manager, Blue Earth County Fair Association  
Bert Hanson, Member, Board of Directors, National Farm Loan Association, Group 227  
W. E. Kent, Weed Inspector Supervisor, Blue Earth County

L. P. Kraus, Past President, Blue Earth County Farm Bureau; President, Blue Earth-Nicollet REA Cooperative

Leland Melrose, Editor, Minnesota Farm Bureau News

#### Health

Dr. Barr, Assistant Director, Minnesota Department of Health

Dr. A. J. Chesley, Secretary, Minnesota Board of Health and Director, Minnesota Department of Health

Dr. Haven Emerson, American Public Health Association

Laura Hegstad, District Nurse (State Unit No. 2)

Fred Heisel, District Sanitary Engineer

Mr. Jennings, Mankato Milk Inspector

Dr. A. F. Kemp, Mankato Health Officer

Dr. A. G. Liedloff, Blue Earth County Health Officer; President, Blue Earth County Public Health Association; Acting Director, Minnesota District Health Unit No. 2

Clara Paschke, County Nurse

T. E. Thompson, District Inspector, Division of Dairy and Food Inspection, Minnesota State Department of Agriculture, Dairy, and Food

Herbert Wagen, Executive Secretary, Blue Earth County Welfare Board

Miss J. Weblemoe, Mankato Teachers College

Public Health Nurse

#### Highways

Interviews with the State Commissioner of Highways, with the 7th District Engineer, and with the County Engineer were held and reported by Ralph Swenson, staff member of the Blue Earth County Council on Intergovernmental Relations. Personal interviews included:

Nels Johnson, Maintenance Engineer, 14th District of Road Maintenance, Minnesota Department of Highways

Al Kircher, Mankato City Engineer

Norman Moe, Highway District Foreman, 14th District of Road Maintenance

Chester O'Toole, Sergeant, Second District Highway Patrol, Minnesota Department of Highways

E. Lester Schwartz, Assessor, Vernon Center Township

A. D. Stanford, Clerk, Mankato Township

Fred Wilber, Recorder, Vernon Center

#### Finance

Herbert Arnold, Treasurer, Mankato Township

F. W. Bates, City Clerk, Mankato Township

Richard Golling, Minnesota Public Examiner

Stafford King, Minnesota State Auditor

A. P. Krost, former City Assessor, Mankato; at present County Supervisor of Assessments, Blue Earth County

B. E. Lee, Auditor, Blue Earth County

Mrs. Elise Philips, Superintendent of Schools, Blue Earth County

Dean Schweickhard, State Commissioner of Education

G. Howard Spaeth, State Commissioner of Taxation

Rudolph Thompson, Treasurer, Blue Earth County

R. A. Whitaker, Chief of Division of State and Local Finance (Public Examiner's Department)

John F. Willmott, Staff Member, United States Bureau of the Budget

### GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

#### Local Government

As explained above, the principal sources of information at the local level were interviews held with the various local officials and the records they made available. Of these, the most valuable were the records of the county auditor which centralize financial data from all local units. Other sources relied upon were the following:

Amboy Village: William Mead, Clerk

Common School Districts: Mrs. Elise Philips, County Superintendent

Garden City Township: T. G. Crane, Treasurer

Lake Crystal City: Lake Crystal Tribune

Lyra Township: W. P. DeWitz, Clerk

Madison Lake Village: Frank Gifford, Clerk

Mankato: F. W. Bates, City Clerk; McLean and Kuhlman Company, Auditors

Mankato School District: Mr. Anderson, Superintendent; Loretta Veigel, Secretary

Mankato Township: Herbert Arnold, Treasurer; A. D. Stanford, Clerk

Mapleton Village: Blue Earth County Enterprise

Vernon Center Township: E. Lester Schwartz, Assessor; Martin Schwarz, Supervisor

Vernon Center Village: Fred C. Wilber, Recorder

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Auditor (1865-1945)

Board of Corrections and Charities (1884-1901);

Board of Control (1901-1938); Department of Social Security (1939-1945)

Board of Health (1873-1945)

Board of Highway Commissioners (1906-1916); State Highway Commissioner (1917-1945)  
 Bureau of Labor (1899-1920); Industrial Commission (1921-1945)  
 Dairy and Food Commission (1899-1925); Department of Agriculture, Dairy, and Food (1925-1945)  
 District Unit No. 2, Minnesota Department of Health (1938-1945)  
 Public Examiner (1879-1945)  
 Railroad and Warehouse Commission (1875-1945)  
 State-Federal Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, Minnesota Agricultural Statistics (annual since 1922)  
 Superintendent of Public Instruction, later State Board of Education (1860-1945)  
 Tax Commission (1908-1939); Department of Taxation (1939-1945)  
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